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On the cover

Cover Photograph by JOHN GRUEN
Styling by INGRID LEESS

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PHOTOS: (TOP) LISA ROMEREIN; (BOTTOM) BURCU AVSAR. STYLING: (TOP) CHAR HATCH LANGOS; (BOTTOM) VAUGHAN GLIDDEN FOR LINDEN ELSTRAN STUDIO

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Who says home renovation is no fun?

Share the last laugh with our crew as they celebrate the complete restoration of an 1895 Victorian.

PHOTO: CARL TREMBLAY

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A few truths about faux

The editor, inspecting some plaster ceiling details in his living room, up close.

"Crikey, look at that, mate."

That was the first contractor on our remodel. He was Australian, hence the choice of words, and had a penchant for tall tales far exceeding that of any other contractor I've worked with before or since.

His crew had just gutted the late-1970s bathroom redo at the top of the stairs, exposing the back side of the staircase's curved wall, including the back of the niche, which some call a coffin corner, that is set into it.

Here's what his "crikey" alerted me to: The shelf part of the niche was actually a piece of marble, though you'd never have known it given what was likely a century of paint that covered its outward-facing edges. But even more interesting were the crosspieces that formed the niche's half curve—thin birch branches, most with the papery bark still attached, each fastened to an upright with a small brad. It was to these branches that the plaster that formed the contour of the niche was keyed. "Crikey," I said.

It's details like the marble and birch, both what's seen and what's hidden beneath the surface, that attract me to old houses. And it's why I also say "crikey" about two stories in this issue: "Detail Work," the tale of the remarkable restoration of an 1850s Italianate that shares some—just some—of the details found in my own, far more modest house, and "20 Easy Ways to Get Old-House Charm," a collection of modern products that make achieving vintage character a snap.

We tend to think of plaster medallions, Venetian plaster covering a fireplace surround, and the turned balusters of a curving walnut staircase as examples of a special kind of craftsmanship. And given many of today's construction methods and details, they are. But the truth is each of those products, like many featured in "Old-House Charm," was its own era's shortcut or faux product, meant to make things faster, easier, cheaper. The stair parts were a product of machining, thanks to the newly burgeoning Industrial Revolution. The Venetian plaster, a less expensive, lightweight way of creating the illusion of marble. The ceiling medallions and other ornamentation, mold-made rather than carved from wood or stone, as they had been for centuries prior. Likewise my stairway niche.

Seems like there's always been a bit of fiction in home construction, and you know what? That's okay. As long as it doesn't say "crikey" in an Australian accent.

SCOTT OMELIANUK, EDITOR
scott@thisoldhouse.com

Got your own tale of woe?
Misery loves company. Share your DIY gaffes, goofs, and gripes with me on Twitter @scottomelianuk using #TellTOH.

PHOTO: IAN SPANIER

Reader mail

HEARING OF YOUR SUCCESS *is something we never tire of. Readers shared via e-mail and Facebook how TOH stories have inspired their home improvements; another was grateful for video help with a gritty task; and our featured Reader Project shows off newfound cabinetmaking skills. Plus, smart safety advice.*

Correction

→ In "The TOH Top 100," November/December 2015, the website given for Schock's ProHygienic 21 Sink Surface should have been schockamerica.com. Our apologies for the error.

Year-round idea source

This Old House has become one of my favorite magazines, and I keep the issues. Our home is 100 years old, and I put sticky notes on many pages of *TOH* because I know I'll be going back for reference. Our once weed-filled little backyard is now a garden of tranquility with help from April 2014's "All About Hydrangeas" and "What Are Weeds Trying to Tell You?" June 2015 had helpful sections on "Great Outdoor Getaways" and "Weatherproofing Furniture." I needed more storage for my granddaughter's memorabilia, and I found the solution in July 2015's "Stars-and-Stripes Shelving." Thanks, *TOH*!

—L. WALKER, BROOKLYN, N.Y.

On to the next

TOH has been my inspiration for dozens of projects. Just re-created my stock vanity to look like a freestanding one and used an idea about painting, then antiquing it with a stain [September 2015]. I am so happy with it. Ready for the next project!

—G. W., VIA FACEBOOK

Lathe safety reminders

In October 2015's "Readers' Tips," a reader has an easy-sounding method for sanding round spindles. Her basic premise, using a lathe, is great. However, one should never loop anything around the workpiece, as with the sanding belt she used, lest it catch on the wood and roll up around it. It's safer to use an open strip of sandpaper, held from both ends. If this gets caught, it's pulled out of your fingers and flies harmlessly onto the far side of the lathe. And never wear gloves, which also could catch on the spinning workpiece.

—DAVID JANOWITZ, HOUSTON

Video coaching

Recently, my husband and I were upgrading to a new toilet. To make a long story short, we followed a video you have on how to remove an old flange out of the floor using a chisel. The demonstration was to the point, and my husband understood all the accompanying written instructions. Thanks for the online help!

—BERTHEL MOORE, HAMPTON, VA.

If you need visual help on a project, like the Moores did, visit thisoldhouse.com/video. To find all the articles and video mentioned here, go to thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2016.

READER PROJECT OF THE MONTH

Doubled-up cabinet

CHERAN CAVANAUGH, LAKEVIEW, OREG.

I couldn't find quite the bath cabinet I wanted, but then I saw your "How to Build a Medicine Cabinet" project [far right] online. I modified it to make a double cabinet and reused the glass from my old one. Your plans were so easy to follow, and for my first effort I am very pleased with how it turned out!

HOW TO REACH US

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Checklist

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016

Easy ways to improve your home right now

6 FAST FIXES

☐ **Keep compost going:** Don't forget to fuel your pile with carbon-rich browns, such as shredded newspaper, as well as nitrogen-rich greens, such as kitchen scraps.

☐ **Turn on the air conditioner:** Just for a few minutes! Running the system every other month keeps internal parts lubricated.

☐ **Adjust TV settings:** New flat-screen? Switch off the energy-draining, ultra-bright "demo" mode, meant to attract attention in stores.

☐ **Pack up holiday decor:** To avoid tangles, wind string lights around an empty wrapping-paper tube; to save floor space, stow rolls of gift wrap in a garment bag.

☐ **Help out evergreens:** After heavy snowfall, use a broom to lightly brush snow off any slight branches to relieve them of the extra weight.

☐ **Examine fire extinguishers:** House fires peak in the winter, so store a working extinguisher on each floor with a minimum rating of 2-A:10-B:C, which can cover 10 square feet.

☑ Add plants indoors

January 10 is National Houseplant Appreciation Day. It's no wonder, since now's the time of year when your rooms could use an extra dose of green. Check local nurseries for winter-blooming plants such as jasmine or orchids, which prefer cooler temperatures and bright indirect light—just make sure not to place them too near a heat source, which will dry out and damage the foliage.

PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT) LINDA BURGESS/GETTY IMAGES; SHARON VOS-ARNOLD/GETTY IMAGES; BEVERLY YYCITAL/GETTY IMAGES; C SQUARED STUDIOS/GETTY IMAGES

TOH TIP

☐ Look for air leaks

Air leaks in your home can affect energy bills in the winter (not to mention your comfort). They can be hard to spot, so try this trick: Turn off the fans and furnace, and make sure windows are tightly closed. Then carry lit incense with you as you slowly walk by windows and exterior doors. If the smoke starts changing direction, you've probably got a leak.

☐ Strengthen mailboxes

When snowplows push by, post-mounted mailboxes can take an undeserved beating. Give your mailbox a checkup for wobbly or out-of-plumb parts and make necessary repairs before they get buried in snow. Also make sure any attached house numbers are secure and easy to read, then add reflective tape for extra visibility.

☐ Digitize keepsakes

Protect your mementos from being lost or damaged by scanning old photos and letters and storing them on an external hard drive or cloud-based service. If you have old VHS tapes, audiocassettes, or 8mm film—all of which can deteriorate faster than photo prints—take advantage of a service such as Legacybox, which transfers old footage onto a DVD for easier storage and viewing.

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Edited by Michelle Brunner

home solutions

INSIDE | LIGHTING TIPS | BLIZZARD BUSTERS | DIY HELP | APPLIANCE UPKEEP | MORE

Stepped-up shelving

You might think Carrara marble open shelves are a luxury that's out of reach. Not so fast: Opting for precut marble door saddles from the home center makes this project as down-to-earth as it gets. At $13 for a 36-inch length, these ⅜-inch-thick thresholds are a bargain. For the shelves shown here, we cut ours down to 24 inches with a tile saw and paired them with simple, high-gloss brass brackets ($12 each; signaturehardware.com). Of course, you could easily switch up the look by using ornate iron supports or ones cut from salvaged wood. Whatever way you go, you've got perfectly polished shelves in very little time—no stone yard visit required.

To keep shelves in place on the brackets, we used silicone bumpers ($3 per pack; homedepot.com).

PHOTO: BURCU AVSAR. STYLING: VAUGHAN GLIDDEN FOR LINDEN ELSTRAN STUDIO

6 design tips for better-lit rooms

The fewer hours of daylight at this time of year can leave a space with good sun exposure feeling a bit dim—and they're certainly no boon to ones that receive little or no natural light. Here, advice from interior design pro Michael Murphy of Lamps Plus on how to make your rooms cheery and bright even in the dead of winter. —MEGAN BAKER

1

GO BIG.
If you can only add one source of light, make it big enough to fill the room, says Murphy. The rule of thumb for overhead fixtures: Take the dimensions of the room (say, 10 feet by 10 feet), add them together (so, 20 feet), and switch that number to inches (20 inches). The result is the ideal diameter for your ceiling fixture.

2

MIND THE SHADE.
For optimum light output, stick to overhead fixtures with glass shades. "A metal or fabric shade will create a moody feel, but won't give off much light," Murphy says. "And shades with a metallic lining will send the light straight up and down but not out to the sides."

3

ADD FOCUS.
To bring on brightness where it's needed, add plenty of task lighting. In offices and living rooms, this means using floor or table lamps; in kitchens or baths, task lights often take the form of pendants or recessed lighting. In small spaces, recessed lighting can be preferable to pendant lighting because it takes up less visual space, making the room look larger.

4

DON'T FORGET THE CORNERS.
"People often overlook the corners of the room," Murphy says. "Leaving those dark can make the room feel smaller." Placing a floor or table lamp there can help concentrate light in these dim recesses, casting a glow on the ceiling and making the space feel bigger and brighter.

5

CHOOSE BULBS WISELY.
Ideal brightness—measured in lumens—will vary based on the space you're lighting. For overhead fixtures, look for bright 800-lumen bulbs; for accent lights, aim for a dimmer 450 to 800 lumens per bulb. Be sure to consider the color temperature, too, which is measured on the Kelvin scale. Incandescent bulbs reside at the lower end—up to 2900K—so they'll provide a soft, warm yellowish glow. LED bulbs within the 3500K to 4100K range offer neutral bright-white light. If you're looking for a bulb that simulates daylight, go for one with a color temperature of 5000K or higher.

6

FAKE THE LOOK OF WINDOWS.
Adding mirrors helps bounce light around the room. Just remember to hang mirrors on walls perpendicular to windows for the best effect. Hanging a mirror directly across from a window can reflect the light right back outside, instead of where you want it.

Wintertime workshop woes

If you work or store materials in an unheated shed or garage, a cold snap can cause a project to fail. Take the right steps to avoid these common problems. —KATELIN HILL

Your lumber shrinks A change in humidity can cause lumber to contract in cold, dry air. Unstack the wood and let it acclimate to warmer temps for a few days before working, says *TOH* master carpenter Norm Abram. Test the humidity with a hydrometer and keep it consistent with where the piece will rest long-term. If needed, add moisture back into the air with a humidifier.

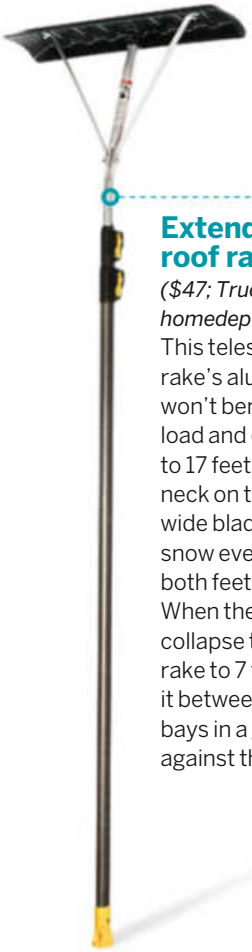
Glue won't hold Water-based adhesives dry faster in dry winter air because the water evaporates in much less time. But if it's too cold, the glue won't bond at all. Check the bottle for the minimum room temperature at which the glue will work. Remember, wood that was stored in the shed can bring the glue's temperature down too.

Paint doesn't adhere Like glue, if the water in latex paint doesn't evaporate, the paint won't take hold. Don't use paint when it's colder than the temp listed on the can, which is usually 50°F. And be wary of storing cans in an unheated space. The chilly air can thicken paint, leading homeowners to overapply.

PHOTOS: (SHOVEL, RAKE) BURCU AVSAR; (OPPOSITE PAGE) CAROLINE MARDON/GAP INTERIORS. ILLUSTRATION: ALLAN SANDERS

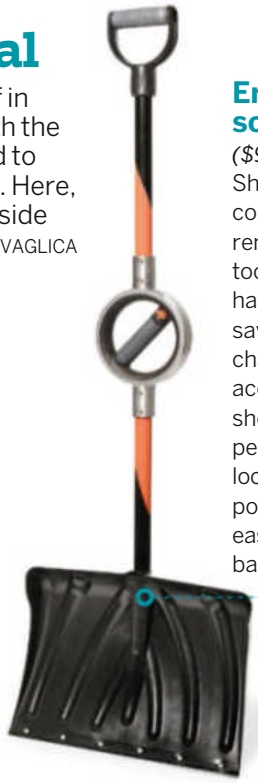
Smart snow removal

After record amounts of the white stuff in recent years, it pays to be prepared with the right tools. The latest breed is designed to make the job faster and less strenuous. Here, three helpers that will have you back inside with a cup of hot cocoa in no time. —SAL VAGLICA



Extendable roof rake

($47; True Temper at homedepot.com)
This telescoping roof rake's aluminum shaft won't bend under the load and can reach up to 17 feet. The curved neck on the 24-inch-wide blade bites into snow even as you keep both feet on terra firma. When the job is done, collapse the 5-pound rake to 7 feet and store it between open rafter bays in a garage or against the wall.



Ergonomic scooper

($90; bossetools.com)
Shoveling is the cornerstone of snow removal, and this tool's rotating center handle is a real back saver. Instead of changing your grip to accommodate the shovel, the secondary perpendicular handle locks in to 16 different positions, making it easier to keep a straight back while you lift.

2 minutes
That's all the snow-lifting it takes to raise your heart rate past recommended levels. Be sure to take frequent breaks and shovel just a few inches at a time.

Easy-moving snowblower

($749; toro.com)
Forget stopping to shift speeds; this snowblower clears a 24-inch-wide path and adjusts to your walking speed, the way today's lawn mowers do. Push into the handle to go faster, or ease up to take it slow on icy patches. It powers through drifts, thanks to its big 212cc engine and a steel rotor that flings snow up the chute 25 percent faster than bigger machines.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

How to haul it all home

A new year brings new remodeling projects, and that means multiple trips to the home center for materials. To reduce the risk of putting a 2×4 through your windshield, stash these three items in your car for safer transport. —S.V.

ROPE: Skip the twine and stick with ½-inch-diameter polyester braided rope when securing things inside the trunk. It's durable and won't degrade. Polyester is stronger than cotton rope and won't stretch like nylon or deteriorate like polypropylene. Tip: Slip a length of foam pipe insulation over the trunk's edge to prevent damage if lumber is hanging out the back.

STRETCH WRAP: Looping this plastic roll a few times around the ends of loose boards or pipes does a better job of holding them together than bungee cords.

RATCHETING STRAPS: Secure sheet goods or furniture to a roof rack with straps that cinch tightly. Look for polyester versions with a 1¼-inch-wide strap for more surface area, and vinyl-coated hooks that won't scratch car paint.

Painting the shelf a subtle blue (Behr's Clear Pool) helps it stand out.

Over-the-door display

Sometimes a genius solution is right in front of you—all you have to do is look up. Taking inspiration from shelves spied above thresholds in colonial-era homes, we topped this doorway with **a decorative ledge**—perfect for showcasing a collection, like these colorful bottles. We simply cut a 2×8 to length and wrapped it with upside-down base cap for a beefed-up profile that complements the door casing. Then we cut triangular brackets from a 2×6, faced them with astragal molding, and attached them with screws. Screwing the shelf into the door casing from above discreetly secures it. Voilà—you've got display space that's worthy of admiration all on its own. —M. BRUNNER

PHOTOS: (RIGHT) WENDELL T. WEBBER; (OPPOSITE PAGE) TIME INC. DIGITAL STUDIO. ILLUSTRATION: EUGENE AND LOUISE STUDIO

Vacuum cleaner tune-up

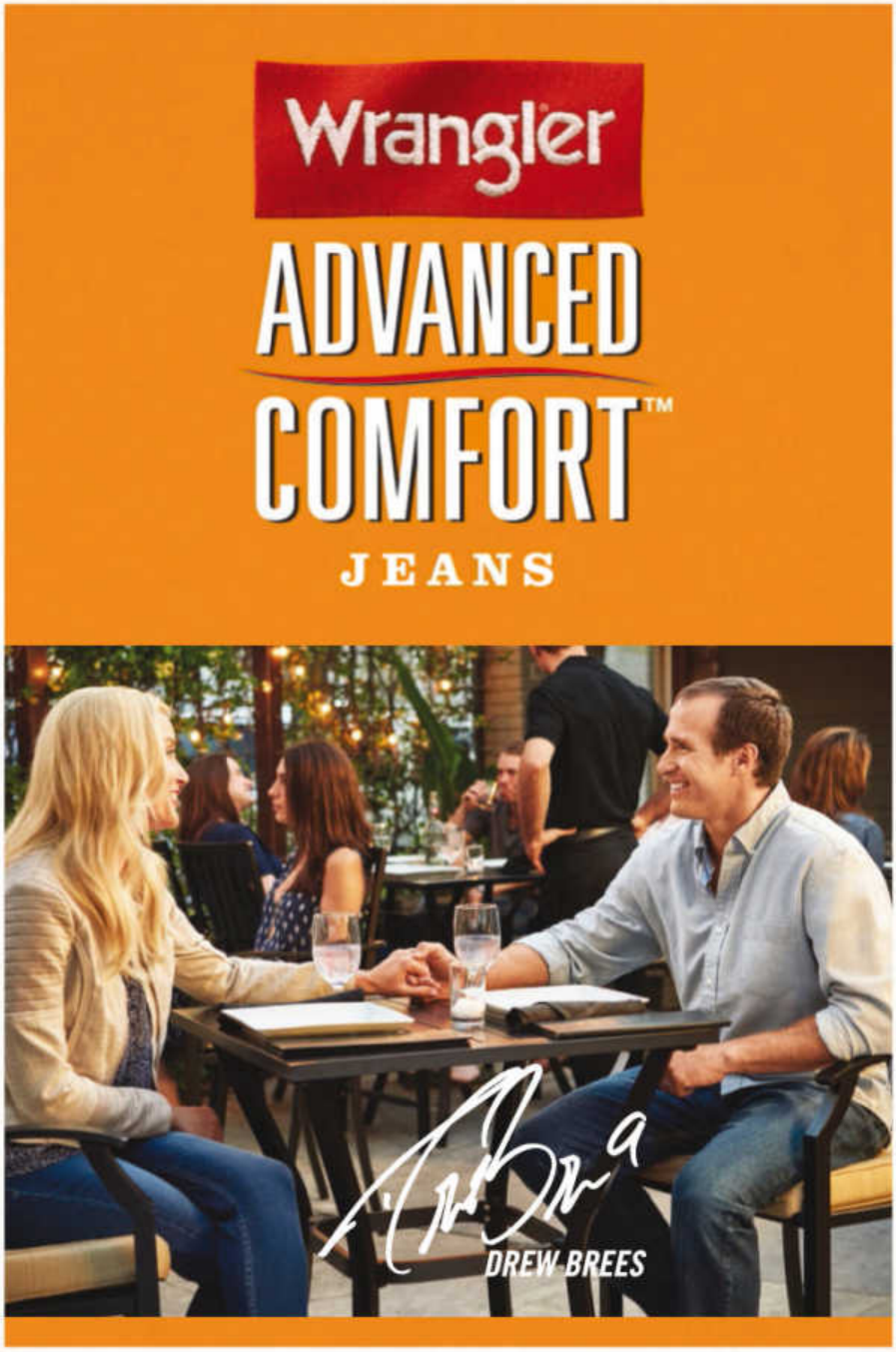
If this hardworking dirt magnet seems to be losing suction, it may need routine maintenance. For optimal performance, check these spots in this order.

BRUSH ROLL (A.K.A. BEATER BAR) Hair, fiber, or other debris can get tangled along the roll, which can strain the motor. Flip the vac upside down, and detach the brush roll if possible. Carefully use a seam ripper or a pair of scissors to remove wound-up fibers.

BELT Often, the brush roll spins with the help of a belt. Over time, the rubber can stretch out. If it's loose, or if you've noticed a burnt-rubber smell, a decrease in speed, or a complete stop of the brush roll, it's time to replace—usually about every three months.

HOSE Disconnect the hose from the vacuum, and use a flexible plastic drain snake to push or pull any obstructions out.

FILTER Disposable filters should be replaced every four to six months. Washable filters can last up to two years but should be cleaned every eight weeks. For both disposable and washable HEPA filters, check the manufacturer's guidelines for when to replace. If your vacuum has a prefilter designed to capture large particulates, it should be checked every three to four months.



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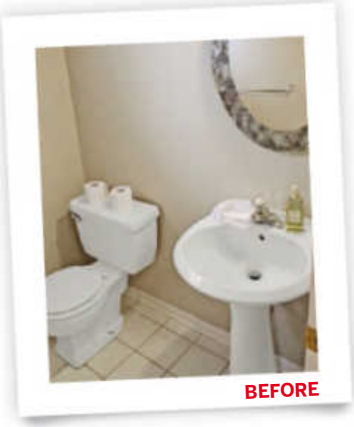
Architectural details and a monochromatic paint scheme add a dose of drama to a formerly drab space



BEFORE The main-floor powder room was dated and devoid of personality—the definition of beige and "blah."

AFTER Floor-to-ceiling paneling and a moody palette give the room a luxe feel. The updated rectangular sink (BOTTOM) sits on a wood console. A bronze sconce and a gold mirror pop against gray walls.

SOMETIMES, LEFTOVER PROJECT materials can inspire a new design. After Sabrina and Mike Macchione's whole-house renovation, they had a pile of shoe molding and a gallon of dark paint, so they decided to incorporate it all into the powder room of their Toronto home—a small space where, Sabrina says, she felt willing to take a big risk, stylewise. First they removed the toilet and sink and replaced the dated ceramic floor tile with leftover oak hardwood. Wanting the look of traditional paneling, Sabrina and Mike mocked up a design on paper, then nailed in the molding to create the wall frames. A coat of graphite paint unifies trim and walls for a seamless effect. Sabrina bought a rectangular vessel sink, and the couple built a custom console base using 4×4s, which they stained and polyurethaned. For the ceiling, Sabrina hung textured vinyl wallpaper that she painted a deep indigo blue. Adding a coffered ceiling grid made from MDF strips gave it more architectural character. Now, Sabrina, who blogs about her renovation at pinklittlenotebook.com, loves her half bath. "We went out of our comfort zone," she says of the dramatic result. "And we couldn't be happier." —KATELIN HILL

THE PROJECT TALLY

Laid down oak hardwood left over from remodeling the rest of the house..... *$0*

Created wall panels using shoe molding they had on hand, then painted the walls with leftover gray paint..... *$0*

Bought a new sink and built a custom console for it out of 4×4s.....*$106*

Installed a sleek single-handle faucet and a dual-flush toilet..... *$228*

Hung textured wallpaper on the ceiling, painted it deep blue, then layered on a grid of MDF 1×4s.....*$30*

Removed the glass globe from an exterior sconce, added an opaque round bulb, and mounted it above the sink.....*$30*

Swapped mirrors with Sabrina's mother for a fresh new look..... *$0*

TOTAL.....*$394*

PHOTOS: LEFT OF CENTRE PHOTOGRAPHY

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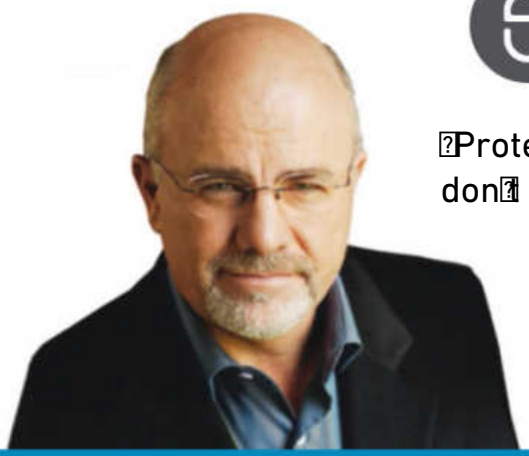

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Room with a view

Opening up an isolated kitchen transforms it from a blind alley to the expansive hub of family life

BY CAROLE BRADEN • PHOTOGRAPHS BY LISA ROMEREIN

STORAGE AND COUNTER space shortages are standard issue in old-house kitchens, and Jill Martin and Andrew Kylander-Clark's was no exception. But the couple, who share the 1940s bungalow, in Santa Barbara, California, with their two young sons, had a site- (and sight-) specific complaint: The kitchen was one big blind spot. "It was cut off from every other room in the house," says Jill, an avid home cook. "I needed to be able to make a meal *and* see what my kids were up to."

Interior designer Jessica Risko Smith, charged with redoing the space, had a simple solution—fix the flow. First up: removing the door and wall that closed off the kitchen from the laundry at one end and the narrow pocket door to the dining room at the other. Ditching both created wider passageways to open up the space. Next, moving the sink tapped a light-filled alcove—and allowed for Jill's coveted farmhouse basin. Now the kitchen has ample meal-prep areas and is packed with both open and closed storage. "We doubled our counter space and found a place for everything," Jill says. "All while improving the view in every direction."

BEFORE Marooned at the front of the house, the kitchen had an odd corner sink and dated finishes.

AFTER The sink got a new home in an existing bay with all-new windows for front-yard views. Open shelves and storage cubbies keep the space feeling airy and bright. *Sink: Rohl. Faucet: Grohe*

PRODUCED BY TISHA LEUNG. STYLING: CHAR HATCH LANGOS

homeowner tip

JILL MARTIN,
SANTA BARBARA, CALIF.

"A section of butcher-block countertop disguises a necessary seam in the veined quartzite. And it's so useful—it's one of the things I love most about the kitchen."

A step stool makes accessing ceiling-high storage easy. The "pocket" shelves were deliberately left open so that Jill wouldn't forget about her trove of cookbooks and serving pieces. *Paint (walls and upper cabinets): Frazee Paint's Akamina*

A food-prep station to the right of the sink includes open dry-goods storage, a stretch of built-in butcher block for knife tasks, and a lift insert in a lower cabinet for the stand mixer, which formerly lived in the laundry-room closet. *Butcher block: IKEA. Subway tile: Buena Tile + Stone*

Lots of light, a cool color palette, and vastly improved flow make the galley-style kitchen feel spacious and inviting. Jill wanted a calm, clean look, so she opted for custom cabinets painted dove gray, which carries through to the upper walls of the adjacent dining room. *Paint (gray cabinets): Sherwin-Williams's Cityscape*

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

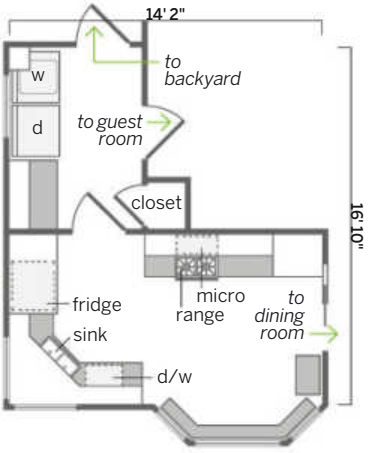
Hand-painted tile on the range wall adds a big-budget touch to the economical white subway tile used elsewhere in the room. Andrew, a geologist, vetoed stain-thirsty marble counters in favor of equally pricey gray-veined quartzite, which can be as durable as granite. *Tile: NS Ceramic. Range: Wolf*

The new hardwood floors were stained to match those in the rest of the house. They offer a warm contrast to the cool-gray cabinets. *Refrigerator: Samsung. Lights: Restoration Hardware. Cabinet knobs and pulls: Emtek*

KEEN ON OPEN SHELVING? Find a user's guide at **thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2016**

before

Awkward doorways to the laundry and dining rooms made the kitchen feel cut off.



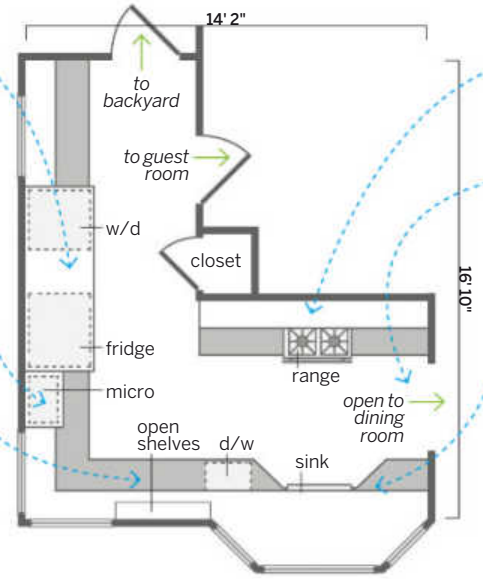
after

Incorporating the laundry room and dining area into one continuous circuit makes the home's first floor more functional and family-friendly.

1. Removed the laundry-room door and wall, making space for a large pantry cabinet between the fridge and new stacked washer and dryer.

2. Moved the microwave next to the fridge to allow for a proper range hood.

3. Created a cook's center with open shelving above a built-in butcher-block counter.



4. Centered the new range on the interior wall.

5. Removed a pocket door and widened the opening to the dining area.

6. Raised new bay windows to accommodate the sink. Added pull-out waste bins on either side, set at angles that follow the bay.

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PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT) SUSAN TEARE; WENDELL T. WEBBER; CHRIS EVERARD/IPC+ SYNDICATION; JAMES GARDINER/IPC+ SYNDICATION; WENDELL T. WEBBER.

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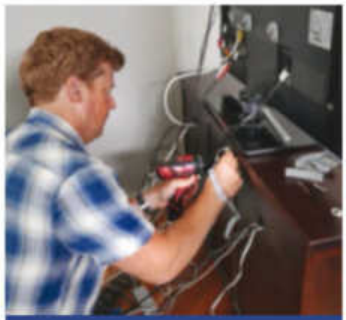

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Upsized and unified

A spare bedroom turned dressing area offers a spot for a new master bath with an old-house vibe

BY NINA MALKIN • PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEX HAYDEN

HISTORIC CHARM often ends at the bathroom door. It certainly did at Roger Nyhus's 1906 home in Seattle, where the bath was a showerless space with, as he says, "only enough storage for a toothbrush." What he craved instead was "a spa-like sanctuary where I could get centered in the morning and wash away stress at the end of the day." And while Roger wanted to respect the house's history, he didn't want to compromise on features like a large tub and a separate shower.

Designers Mike Freeman and Kim Clements found space to spare by converting the existing master bath into a walk-in closet and commandeering an approximately 15-foot-square bedroom turned dressing area for the new bath. Working around a large window, they placed a double vanity and a shower on one wall perpendicular to it, and a freestanding tub and enclosed commode opposite them. A deep soffit above the sinks creates an alcove effect, and tile "rugs" divide the room into stations. "The tile rugs make it especially homey," Roger says. "I've never walked in and felt it was too big. It fits me perfectly."

BEFORE A spare room leading to the master suite served as a makeshift dressing area.

AFTER Basketweave tile with broad borders forms "rugs" that carve out different areas in the large bath. Custom cabinets provide ample storage. *Paint (cabinet): Farrow & Ball Green No. 75*

PRODUCED BY TISHA LEUNG. STYLING: RACHEL GRUNIG

homeowner tip

ROGER NYHUS, SEATTLE

"Putting a dimmer switch on every light is important in a bath. If you get up at 3 A.M. you don't want to have glaring light."

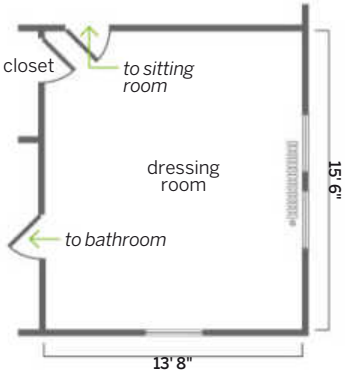
Perforated-metal door panels on the built-in linen cabinet let you see what's inside, and keep sheets and towels aerated.

The wainscot cap alongside the tub is extra-deep to form a shelf for candles, cocktails, and other necessities. *Tub: Waterworks. Tub filler: Hansgrohe*

MORE VINTAGE INSPIRATION
Find additional ideas for creating a period-look bath at **thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2016**

before

Doors to the sitting room and the bath dated to when the home served as a boardinghouse.



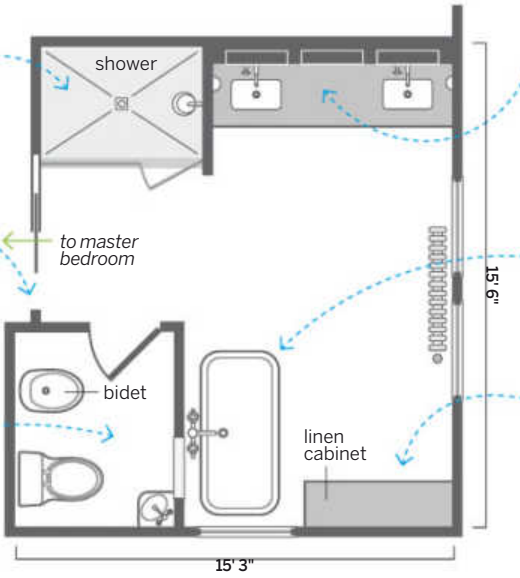
after

The thoroughly modern new bath features separate bathing, grooming, and lavatory areas, as well as ample natural light.

1. Closed up two doors to create a large shower with a frameless glass enclosure.

2. Added a pocket door leading to the rest of the master suite to eliminate a door swing.

3. Built an enclosed water closet, fitted with toilet, bidet, and corner sink.



4. Placed an 8-foot double vanity with three medicine cabinets to the left of the large window.

5. Installed a freestanding tub near the other window for natural light.

6. Put a wainscot-high linen cabinet in the corner opposite the sinks.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

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Walk-ins welcome

Flat-pack shelving and storage pieces fast-track the DIY design-build of a pair of sanity-saving his-and-hers closets

BY NINA MALKIN • PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURA MOSS

CUSTOM CLOSETS are a pricey prospect. That's why Ryerson Kipp and Meredith McBride Kipp went the DIY route after moving into their 1805 farmhouse, in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey. "Creating a clean, restful place to sleep and get dressed in the morning was our priority," says Meredith, since their previous gut renovation had relegated scratch-built closets and a remodeled bedroom to last place. "We got so tired of dressing out of laundry baskets—we couldn't live with that chaos again," says Ryerson.

To speed up their timeline, they decided on a shortcut: Design around stock shelf and storage units and trim them out for a built-in look. The existing bedroom closet would become Ryerson's, while an adjoining office would be fitted out for Meredith's wardrobe.

BEFORE An office turned catchall off the master bedroom became her closet.

AFTER There's a place for everything with this organized setup, which has a boutique look. Back-to-back cubes enhanced with trimwork and a mirrored top form the peninsula; a bookshelf extended to the ceiling stores handbags and sweaters. *Cubes and bookcase: Home Decorators Collection*

HERS BEFORE

In her closet

The building blocks of her open wardrobes are white-finished "assembly required" storage pieces: two plain dressers, three cube units, and a trio of bookcases.

PRODUCED BY TISHA LEUNG. STYLING: JENNIFER VREELAND

In his closet

Flat-pack furniture pieces form the core of his storage strategy: a glass-front cabinet and an armoire with doors and drawers that he refinished with gray paint.

BEFORE His no-frills closet had rods along both sides and shelves overhead.

AFTER The haberdashery-inspired space in shades of gray holds a glass-front cabinet and an armoire, their feet wrapped with base molding for a built-in look. *Hemnes linen cabinet and wardrobe (no longer available): IKEA*

They researched like mad online, then sketched a plan, laying out the positions of the prefab pieces with painter's tape. They created hanging space and shoe storage from scratch, and beefed up fiberboard-backed shelves and cubbies with interior bracing. To maximize storage, they added on to pieces to rise ceiling high, and built everything in by running crown and base molding along top and bottom, trimming out seams, and paneling exposed sides, as needed.

All told, the couple spent about $5,000 for both walk-ins; one-third the cost of custom closets, says Meredith, who has commissioned these for her interior-design clients. The results, they say, bring them joy and confidence—and moments of peace in the project-filled home they now share with their 1-year-old. "Ry actually meditates in his," says Meredith. "And I've even hosted a cocktail party in mine!"

homeowner tip

MEREDITH McBRIDE KIPP, FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J.

"Categorize and measure the width of your hanging clothes to figure out how much room you'll need."

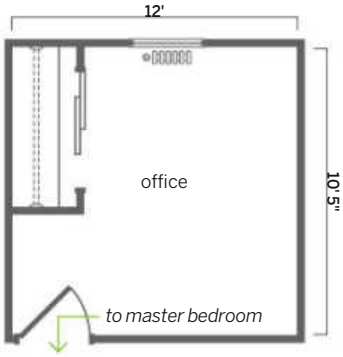
With the doors off, the original closet is a storage alcove, where shirts hang above a pair of dressers. To avoid having to sand and repaint pieces that come with a lacquer finish, Meredith chose a color she liked and found paint to match for the added trim. *Malm dressers: IKEA*

Not all shoes are display-worthy, so allow space for boxes or baskets to hold out-of-season or less-used footwear. *Bookcases: Home Decorators Collection*

PRO ADVICE Find closet-design tips from an architect at **thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2016**

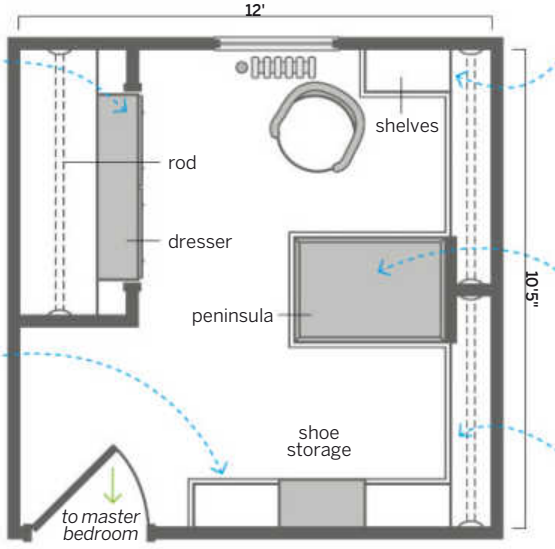
hers before

The former office had a small closet, a window with a radiator below it, and plenty of space.



hers after

On-display short and long hanging space, to-the-ceiling shelves, and a cubby peninsula offer organized storage—and good circulation—in a room-size closet.



1. Gutted the original closet and removed the doors; built a frame to hold a hanging rod with a shelf overhead. United a pair of dressers below.

2. Built in and trimmed out two bookshelves with a six-cube unit in between for shoes.

3. Installed a bookshelf and extended it to the ceiling; stacked two tiers of short hanging space with a shelf above.

4. Created a peninsula from two cube units; moved electrical to center a chandelier above it.

5. Built a wardrobe with long hanging space, topped with a shelf.

Next to the armoire, Ryerson stacked hanging rods for short items. He anchored the furniture to the walls using hardwood strips. The chair was his great-grandfather's.

homeowner tip

RYERSON KIPP,
FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J.

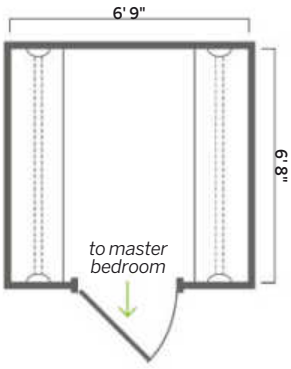
"Adding a piece of hardwood along inside edges of a prefab piece gives it a sturdier, more substantial feel."

A ceiling soffit with open storage to hold lidded boxes keeps attire ready to wear.

Pine shelves are set at a slight angle, with a 1× ledge to catch heels and hold footwear in place. *Ekby Riset angled shelf brackets (no longer available): IKEA*

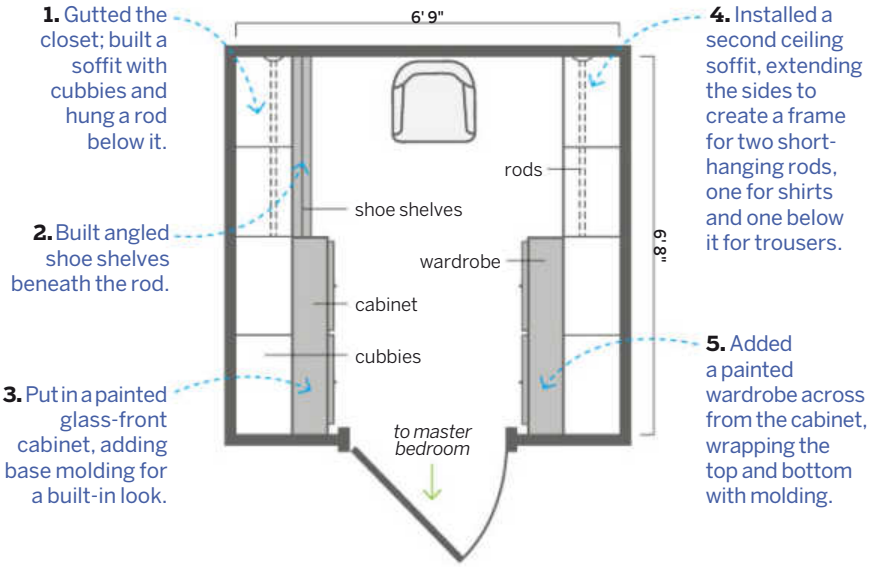
his before

Though large enough, the closet lacked organized storage solutions.



his after

A mix of built-from-scratch storage and assembly-required furniture maximizes space from floor to ceiling—with a bit of breathing room.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

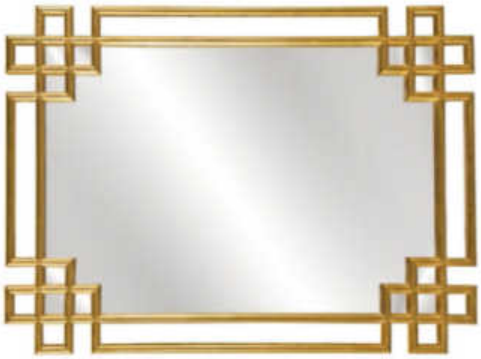
Jewel-box dining room

Pattern play and a color scheme worthy of a Fabergé egg create a lively gathering space that's traditional but not staid

BY MICHELLE BRUNNER • PHOTOGRAPH BY STACEY BRANDFORD

EVEN A BLAND dining room can be made into an elegant destination with the right finishing touches. Take this stunning space by interior designer Sarah Richardson. To give the room more architectural character, she started by adding a chair rail with wall frames below. Then she assembled a collection of vintage furniture finds, including a Sheraton-style table and shield-back chairs, imparting a sense of history. Scrolling gold-accented wallpaper echoes the shapes of the seat backs, while a round chandelier throws the room another curve. Antique brass accents and chinoiserie-inspired florals amp up the drama, making even the simplest meal feel like a special occasion.

For ways to give your dining space a similarly regal treatment, read on.



wall mirror

The highly detailed looking glass at right comes with a mosaic border, gilded bead trim, and a high-end price tag. A stylized Greek-key motif gives this well-priced version from Bassett Mirror similar presence. $344; wayfair.com

scroll-patterned wallpaper

Inspired by the curves of a violin, this wall covering makes a big statement; using it only above the chair rail means a little goes a long way. Nina Campbell for Osborne & Little, $144 for a 33-foot roll; decoratorsbest.com

PHOTOS: (WALLPAPER, GLASSWARE, FABRIC, CHAIR, SCONCE, MOLDING) BURCU AVSAR; (PAINT DABS) TED MORRISON

candle chandelier

Cast a flattering glow over the table with a round chandelier like this iron one from Quoizel, which features a silhouette similar to the vintage find below. $470; wayfair.com

glassware

Rose-colored glasses, not to mention a single flower at each place setting, make every guest feel special. Tumblers, $10 each; anthropologie.com. Dessert bowl, $5.56; surlatable.com

embroidered fabric

Upholstering only the backs of the chairs in a rich peony print is a clever way to use a pricey fabric sparingly and add an unexpected touch. Just one yard of this silk covers three backs. $70 per yard; fabricmill.com. Trim, $3.98 per yard; mjtrim.com

shield-back chairs

Richardson scored the six seats at left in a consignment shop. We found an affordable stand-in and covered it with the same sunny geometric print. Chair, $199; bedbathandbeyond.com. Robert Allen fabric, $30 per yard; joann.com

sconce

Made in enameled and gilded metal, tole candleholders like those used in this room were popular in France and Italy in the early to mid-20th century. We found this look-alike for $36 on etsy.com.

DIY

Wall-frame wainscot

To get the look at left, tack up chair rail ($2.50 per foot; lowes.com), then miter-cut to size panel molding (about $1 per foot at home centers). Attach with panel adhesive and brads; to see a how-to video, go to thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2016. A two-tone gray color scheme, like Sherwin-Williams's Misty and Agreeable Gray, gives the wainscot added dimension.

Storm prep for pets

More extreme-weather events means four-legged friends can get left out in the cold. Here's how to keep them safe

BY HEATHER LIVINGSTON • ILLUSTRATION BY EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

FROM BLIZZARDS that knock out power (and heat!) to rain-swollen river flooding and mudslides, severe storms are a year-round concern. You've made an emergency "go bag" for all the people in your family—but what about your pets? Natural disasters place animals in harm's way, too: The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals assisted 30,000 pets in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, according to Dick Green, EdD, senior director of disaster response for the organization.

Here are a few precautionary measures to ensure your pet's safety.

Make identification easy

Because you and your furry friend could get separated during a disaster, **it's a good idea to have him microchipped.** A capsule about the size of a grain of rice, containing a serial number, is implanted under the skin between your pet's shoulder blades; the serial number is registered in a national database so that he can be identified should he get lost. You also receive a tag for your pet's collar with the chip number and registry phone number. Most vets and animal shelters will implant microchips for a small fee (about $45).

Be prepared for evacuation

Put together a go bag for your pet, too, suggests Leili Khalessi of RedRover, a nonprofit animal-welfare organization. It should include a one-week supply of food, water, and medications, plus bowls and a can opener. Also have a spare ID tag, to record new contact info, and a pet first-aid kit. (For a detailed checklist of what to pack, visit humanesociety.org.)

Have an appropriate carrier at the ready: "In our garage, we have a labeled portable kennel or crate for every animal in the house," says Green. On the top of each carrier, duct-tape a clear envelope containing a copy of medical and vaccination records and a picture of the animal. Review emergency information on your local government's website, and search in advance of an impending storm for pet-friendly accommodations. Khalessi recommends monitoring social media for up-to-the-minute shelter information.

Don't leave home without 'em

If nothing else, **make sure each pet is wearing a collar and tags,** and never leave animals behind. Says Green: "If people would do those two things, we could greatly increase the number of families reunited with their pets."

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RYOBI® introduces a new tool that defines professional features at an affordable price: the 18-volt ONE+™ Drain Auger. This unit helps clear clogs with ease from drains up to 2 inches wide including sinks, toilets, and bath tubs. It also features a 25 foot reinforced cable that will minimize kinking. **ryobitools.com**

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schockamerica.com

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The all-new **Flip and Grip 6-in-1** tool is the first multitool with genuine **Crescent®** wrench turning power. It features a wrench instead of pliers, and with its 3/8" to 5/8" jaw capacity, it fits over 40 different fasteners. Its spring-loaded, ratchet-action jaw grips tighter as you turn harder, and folds to just five inches so it easily fits in your pocket. In addition to the wrench, it has 3/16" slotted and #2 Phillips-head screwdrivers, a knife with both smooth and serrated blade edges, a can/bottle opener, a wire stripper, and a fold-out lanyard ring. Available at The Home Depot and leading hardware retailers nationwide. **crescenttool.com**

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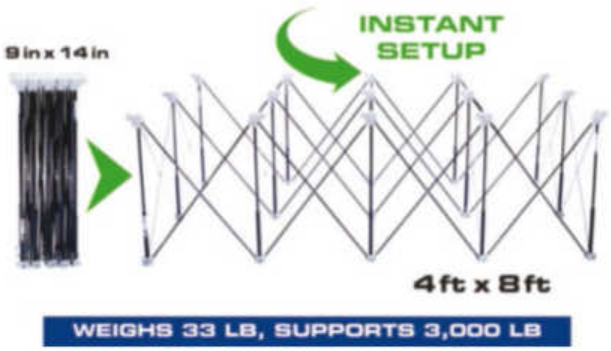

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The **Centipede® Support XL** is a compact, lightweight, and durable support frame that instantly sets up to support 3,000 pounds. Multiple steel struts accordion out to hold 4-by-8-foot sheet materials without sagging, perfect for cutting or use as a sturdy workbench. Available at retailers nationwide. For more information: **centipedetool.com**

Time-Lapse Construction Camera

TOP 100 PRIZE

BRINNO BCC 100

The Brinno BCC100 time-lapse camera is a simple and affordable way to document your construction project from start to finish. Whether remodeling a kitchen or building your dream home, you can condense months of work into minutes of video. Time-lapse videos are a great way for homeowners and contractors to create appealing videos that allow viewers to watch what unfolds. With included weather-resistant housing, you can record indoors or out, and a set of AA batteries offers an outstanding 4+ months for life for long-term recording. With easy, DIY installation and instant video, the Brinno BCC1100 camera is the effortless way to document any project. **brinnousa.com**

Quiet Comfort

THE SERENITY SERIES FROM HAIER

The average AC is nearly 60 decibels—the sound equivalent of a conversation just three feet away. That added noise has been widely accepted as a longstanding trade-off for the comfort of cooling a room. **The Serenity Series** from **Haier** is 9db quieter on average than window ACs by other major brands. **haieramerica.com**

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Get your hands on **3M™ Ultra Flexible Sanding Sheets**. They fold, roll, shape, and twist! Perfect for flat surfaces, spindles, trim, and other hard-to-reach areas. The tough film backing resists punctures, tears, and creases, helping the sheet keep its original shape. Works for interior and exterior surfaces. **3M.com/ultraflexiblesheetsrolls**

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Bar carts

Retro rollers offer up stylish storage for libations and their accoutrements

BY MEGAN BAKER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY BURCU AVSAR

THERE'S NO DENYING the luxury of having a cart just for entertaining, with glasses, decanters, and bottles at the ready. But that glamour belies the true practicality of these pieces—with multiple tray tiers, and wheels for mobility, they provide a sweet storage spot that's easy to tuck away when not in use. Bar carts are most closely associated with the 1950s and 1960s, when at-home dinner parties were in vogue and the cocktail hour was a daily ritual, but they're picking up steam again thanks in large part to a renewed interest in DIY mixology. Here, nine different takes, from rustic to refined, to suit your home's style—whether you're hosting a New Year's shindig or just toasting a paint job well done.

1 > striking gold
CREATIVE CO-OP
Made of: Galvanized iron
Size: 34.5"W × 17.88"D × 30.13"H
Highlights: The oval shape is eye-catching and provides plenty of usable deck space to boot. $273; wayfair.com

STYLING: VAUGHAN GLIDDEN FOR LINDEN ELSTRAN STUDIO

2

3

4

5

2 > gilded

PIER 1 IMPORTS
Made of: Wrought iron and glass
Size: 37"W × 14½"D × 32¼"H
Highlights: Gold-toned bamboo is a mid-century classic. An antiqued finish gives it a vintage vibe. $330; pier1.com

3 > factory style

EC WORLD IMPORTS
Made of: Composite wood and iron
Size: 32"W × 17"D × 31"H
Highlights: Weathered wood and an iron frame lend an industrial air; the curved silhouette softens up the look. $190; wayfair.com

4 > space-age

CB2
Made of: Powder-coated steel and glass
Size: 19½"W × 19½"D × 30"H
Highlights: Gleaming chrome-and-glass construction seems retro and futuristic all at once. $179; cb2.com

5 > '60s sophisticate

WEST ELM
Made of: Walnut-veneered eucalyptus and metal
Size: 32.4"W × 19.9"D × 32"H
Highlights: Warm walnut, shiny brass, and a streamlined shape evoke *Mad Men*–era nostalgia. $349; westelm.com

Shop TOH
For more carts and cocktail necessities, visit **wayfair.com/barcartroundup**

6 > polished penny
PLOW & HEARTH
Made of: Powder-coated steel
Size: 14"W × 33"D × 35"H
Highlights: A simple shape gets dressed up with a darkened copper finish. Bonus: This one's suitable for outdoors, too. $200; plowhearth.com

7 > full circle
COST PLUS WORLD MARKET
Made of: Iron and glass
Size: 28.4"W × 14.2"D × 31.5"H
Highlights: Two giant rings replacing plain old legs on the sides, plus a silvery sheen, give this cart an Art Deco air. $170; worldmarket.com

8 > proper and portable
WILDON HOME
Made of: Steel and MDF
Size: 20.8"W × 18.5"D × 28.5"H
Highlights: Great for small spaces. Both trays pop out for serving, and the legs can fold away when not in use. $99; wayfair.com

9 > island style
THRESHOLD
Made of: Rattan
Size: 25"W × 18"D × 37"H
Highlights: A tropical look might inspire you to stock up tiki-bar-style—perfect for chasing away the cold. $129 (available starting in January); target.com

Faux wall frames

Brush on a paneled look to add dimension to blank walls

BY DEBORAH BALDWIN • PHOTOGRAPH BY NATALIE KADAFER

Light, uneven brushstrokes add to the faux frames' vintage look.

WHEN A ROOM FEELS A bit chilly, period-style paneling can warm it up. So thought Christine Schmidt, a graphic designer and the owner of Yellow Owl Workshop in San Francisco, who considered installing panel molding in her bedroom—"a tall, bland box," as she describes it—but as a renter, wanted something less permanent and costly. Her solution: mock wall frames made possible with paint and tape. She painted the walls creamy white, then, using a 4-inch brush, added a coat of purer white; intentionally uneven brushwork allows some of the base coat to show through, suggesting old plaster. Next, she mapped out the panels on graph paper, working around windows, doors, and the mantel mirror, and transferred the scheme to the walls using a 4-foot level, pencil, and tape. "The tape pulls double duty by allowing you to make sure the dimensions are just right," says Christine, who filled in the lines with a silvery gray and a 1-inch brush. More light, uneven brushstrokes let the base colors peek through, for an aged patina. "A damp sponge wipes away mistakes," she says. "Overall, it's a very forgiving technique."

Materials for this simple project include plenty of painter's tape and a 1-inch brush.

PHOTO: (MATERIALS) TED MORRISON

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

THE FINAL SEASON

DOWNTON ABBEY.

ON SUNDAYS IN JANUARY

It's the job of GRANDMOTHERS to interfere.

DOWNTON ABBEY

At my age, one must RATION one's excitement.

DOWNTON ABBEY

VULGARITY

DOWNTON ABBEY 6

FREE TEA SAMPLER PACK

What is a WEEKEND?

shop PBS.

See the complete *Downton Abbey* collection at **shopPBS.org/DowntonAbbey**

Downton Abbey is a Carnival/MASTERPIECE co-production. Top photo © Carnival Film & Television Limited 2015 for MASTERPIECE. Ad Design © 2016 PBS Distribution.

Details make the difference

They're key to turning a house into a home that's uniquely yours, as interior designer Steven Gambrel demonstrates in his first book

BY KATHRYN KELLER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC PIASECKI

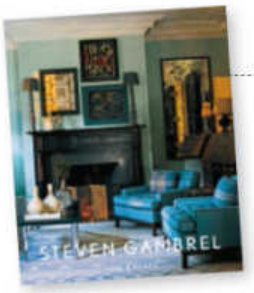
Steven Gambrel

WHEN YOU'RE FEELING short on inspiration for touches to personalize your home, think of Steven Gambrel. The celebrated designer is constantly taking note of, sketching, and filing away architectural fragments, floor patterns, door casings, paneling styles, and the like, creating a rich, personal design library that he can draw on. "I love finding details in old buildings all over the world and giving them a new life in my projects," he explains. Inspiration also can be found close at hand, of course, in local historic houses, say, or nearby city centers. In every case, Gambrel refreshes the traditional elements he so loves with an approach that makes them feel right for today. Witness the rooms—and architectural details—shown here.

1. sliding shutter

In redoing a 19th-century house in Sag Harbor, New York, the designer added a built-in bed with planked surfaces all around, wrapping them in a luxurious old-world blue. The unusual sliding window shutter, copied from one seen at the Custom House museum in town, makes the cocooning complete, ensuring a good night's sleep.

1



Time & Place (Abrams), by Steven Gambrel, is available at independent booksellers and on amazon.com.

2

2. chevron cabinet doors and drawers

The panels in these cabinet fronts designed for a guesthouse kitchen were inspired by chevron doors Gambrel saw in Virginia, where he studied architecture in college. Their graphic lines give the small space major decorative appeal. The open shelves above, with their stepped-block brackets, and the simple paneled wall behind, add supporting layers of interest and detail.

pro advice

STEVEN GAMBREL, S.R. GAMBREL INC., NEW YORK CITY

"Detail in moldings and millwork, coupled with thoughtful use of paint and wall coverings, can really create a substantial, special space. It doesn't have to be complicated or expensive."

3

3. architectural headboards

Striking black silhouettes with graceful curves make a dramatic statement at the head of these guest beds. Inspired by Flemish facades that Gambrel sketched while walking the streets of Brussels, the poplar beds are coated with black lacquer made even glossier with the traditional multistep shellac finish known as French polish. The pared-down bed linens and drapes set them off to great advantage.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

Read this before you buy a mattress

You spend a third of your life in bed, so finding the right mattress is key to getting your zzzs. Read on for the features to look for, then go ahead and wade into that sea of white slabs—buoyed by our experts' tips, of course

BY DEBORAH BALDWIN • ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBBIE PORTER

YOU KNOW IT'S TIME TO LET GO WHEN...

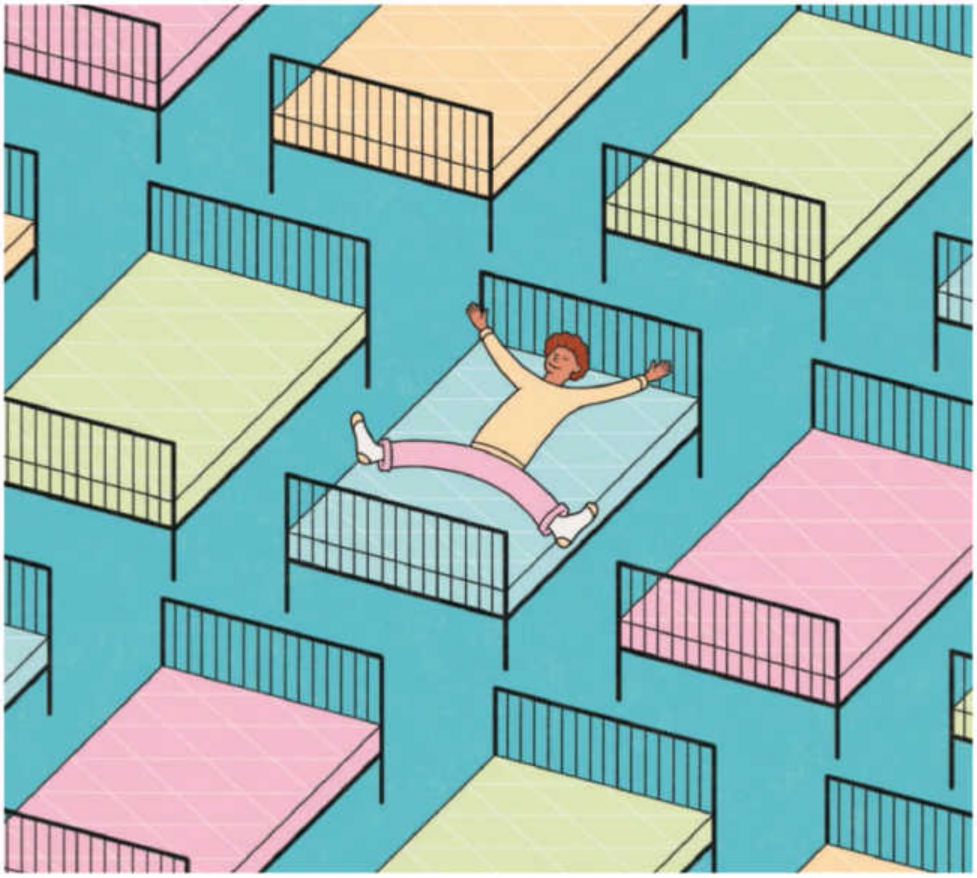
> It's more than 10 years old and sports lumps, dips, or trenches.

> Your hips sink too low, so you wake up with a sore lower back. Sagging means the springs are worn, the batting has flattened, or the mattress or box spring was poorly made.

> You wake up stiff or with shoulder or neck pain.

> You've changed: You've gotten much lighter or heavier, which can affect the body–mattress fit.

> You've gotten older. Young folks tend to like firm mattresses, but as the body grows more mature, it requires more cushioning, especially if you are a side sleeper. Incidentally, getting a good night's sleep generally gets harder as you get older, no matter how your mattress is made.



THE ICK FACTOR

Humans throw off dead skin cells and bodily fluids, and if over time all that weren't weighty enough, dust and dust mites pile in too, never mind pollen and bacteria—and could that possibly be pet fur joining the party? Vacuuming a mattress every couple of months and using a case or cover can help keep it in fighting trim.

INSIDE INNERSPRINGS

Mattresses are made with a softer top, or comfort layer, and a denser middle core, or support layer, which traditionally holds steel springs. Watch out for springs that allow motion transfer from one side of the bed to the other, a.k.a. "partner disruption." Lower-gauge springs offer the most support, so they may be best for folks who are big and heavy. Thinner, higher-gauge springs can be more responsive, or springier. But when talk turns to coil counts and springs that are "oven-baked," "tempered," or made of titanium, keep in mind that what matters is how your body responds when you give the mattress a whirl: The goal is to feel both supported and cushioned.

It's best to have springs encased in separate pockets, or even "socks," as seen in this sample from Room & Board, so they can flex separately to respond to shifting positions and provide support where it's needed.

Latex, foam, or both

Mad scientists are cooking up fresh latex and foam formulas and sandwiching them in artful new ways so that a mattress can omit springs altogether.

NATURAL LATEX, made from rubber-tree sap, is prized for its resilience and durability and is a good choice for the comfort layer. There are two ways it is molded, called Dunlop and Talalay, but more important is to test it for a buoyant, not bouncy, feel.

FOAMS are typically made from petroleum, though alternatives like soybean and other vegetable oils are increasingly going into the mix. Some makers also add gel.

LATEX-FOAM BLENDS are common because all-rubber latex is expensive. Don't assume a "natural latex" label means 100 percent rubber.

MEMORY FOAM responds to body heat and weight by "melting" around pressure points (while remaining firm, for better support, deeper down). It has its fans, partly because it doesn't jiggle, though others find its slow response to changes in sleep position and "sleeping hot" a problem.

SAFETY CHECK OEKO-TEX and CertiPUR-US certifications mean the mattress has been tested for formaldehyde and other chemicals. There are Global Organic standards for latex but not for mattresses as a whole.

INNOVATIVE FOAMS are rated for such things as their ILD (indentation load deflection) and open vs. closed cells, but never mind: Manufacturers do the thinking so you won't have to, and what's key is your comfort. (Note: Old-school springs are said to be better for, ahem, romance.)

CHEMICAL-FREE FLAME FIGHTERS

Used to be that mattresses met fire-safety standards by blending scary chemicals into the flammable foam. But starting in 2007, manufacturers shifted to thin barriers made from fire-resistant natural or synthetic fibers, so if you're buying a new mattress, you can rest easier.

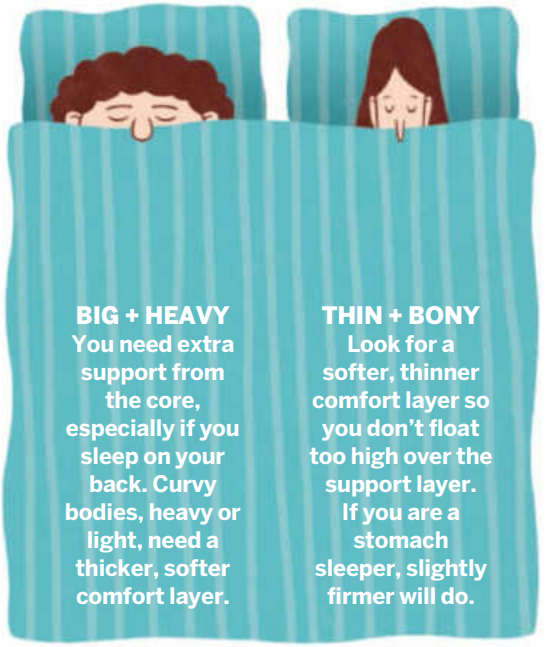
NATURAL REMEDIES Some fibers, such as wool (ABOVE), sisal, and thistle, keep you cool while also providing fire resistance.

THE TREND: HYBRIDS

More and more, mattresses combine innersprings and latex or memory foam, with springs at the core and a soft top layer to cushion joints.

What's your body type?

Sleep style is important, but so is your physique.



BIG + HEAVY You need extra support from the core, especially if you sleep on your back. Curvy bodies, heavy or light, need a thicker, softer comfort layer.

THIN + BONY Look for a softer, thinner comfort layer so you don't float too high over the support layer. If you are a stomach sleeper, slightly firmer will do.

CUSTOMIZE IT!

Like so many things these days, mattresses can be adjusted to suit just you.

SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE > If you and your partner can't agree, pay a little more and order a mattress that's half firm and half less so.

PUMP IT UP > One maker, Select Comfort, uses side-by-side air pockets and an electric pump to allow separate adjustments in firmness in its Sleep Number beds. Its new smartphone app will monitor your sleep, helpful if you want to tweak the setting.

FILL OUT A FORM > New online company Helix will customize a foam-and-microcoil mattress based on your age, height, weight, and favored sleeping position. Over time the company's Netflixesque questionnaire and algorithm should become ever keener. Till then, there's a comfort guarantee.

SLEEP TIGHT
And don't let the bedbugs bite. Learn how to keep them at bay at **thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2016**

PHOTO: (OPPOSITE PAGE) KATHY DEWAR/ISTOCKPHOTO

Store smarts

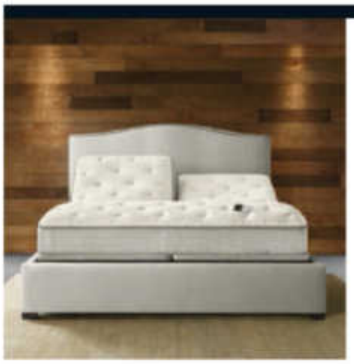
It's always a good idea to try before you buy. But forget speed dating around the showroom. This is a once-every-10-years purchase, so take your time.

IGNORE THE HYPE
Retail-store sales are so common that the list price is often meaningless. Don't be afraid to haggle. Another challenge: The same mattress may be tweaked and sold under a different name in a different store. Yes, this is done to stymie comparison shopping.

FEEL THEM OUT
Get a sense of the sales staff, advises themattressunderground.com, a consumer watchdog group. Salespeople should be ready to talk specifics, from the density of the foam and the nature of the springs to the fiber content of the topping and ticking.

PACK YOUR OWN PILLOW—AND A TIMER
Wear a comfy outfit, like workout clothes, kick off your shoes, relax in sleep mode, and give yourself at least 15 minutes on the mattress, shifting positions. Are your hips and shoulders aligned and well cushioned? You should feel like you're floating.

TWO MORE TESTS
Pressure points like shoulders should sink in while being supported by the core layer, keeping your spine straight. Place one hand under your waist; it should be tough to slide it out. If you jump when your partner plops down on the edge, ask to see a more stable mattress.



ADD A BASE

> Traditional mattresses are designed to lie on a stiff wire foundation, which acts as a shock absorber, extending the mattress's life. Many of today's models do fine on slats, platforms, and boxes covered with foam and fabric.

> Ask what the mattress maker recommends; the long-term warranty may depend on using a certain base. That doesn't mean you have to buy them as a set.

> Flexible bases, like Sleep Number's, above, can elevate your head, knees, and feet and turn your bed into a chaise longue. Sleeping with a snorer? Sleep Number's remote control allows you to raise your partner's head.

Hotel affair

You're away from the usual stresses and strains and find yourself sleeping like a baby. Convinced you'd sleep better if you could just take that hotel mattress home? Maybe you can. Ask at the front desk—major brands like Simmons supply many hotels. The website shophbd.com offers Stearns & Foster and Sealy mattresses made for the Hyatt and the Ritz-Carlton.

WHAT SHOULD IT COST?

The range for a quality queen-size runs from $700 to $1,600. Yes, you can pay more, especially if you crave long-lasting hand-tufted cotton, wool, and, say, hog hair, but experts aren't convinced this will help you sleep. Remember, if you need a new foundation it could double the cost.

ONLINE OPTIONS

Web-based companies like Leesa and Casper offer one-style-fits-all mattresses made with foam or latex and foam. You save money because there's no store overhead, and because a no-springs slab can be vacuum-packed, rolled up like a rug, and delivered in a box, like Tuft & Needle's, above. If you don't like it, you get a full refund. Online dealer Saatva has risen to the challenge with discounted innersprings and more choices; along with a comfort guarantee, you get classic "white glove" delivery.

3 things to remember

1 > Try to get a handle on it. A queen-size can weigh 75 pounds or more. Four comfy handles will help you reposition the mattress or even move it one day.

2 > Carry a ruler. Measure the height of the frame, the mattress, and any base or foundation, lest you literally have to climb into bed. Make sure your sheets still fit, too.

3 > Give it a month. It can take 30 days or more to adjust to a new mattress. Many comfort guarantees allow you to live with it for 60 to 90 days.

PHOTO: (OPPOSITE PAGE, PILLOWS) KARAMMIRI/ISTOCKPHOTO

Mattress care and maintenance

1 > **Protect it with a washable cover or mattress pad.** Some, like one made by Sure Fit, add a bit of cushiness, too. If you are allergic to dust mites or worried about spills or even bedbugs, there are specially designed covers and cases.

2 > Assuming the manufacturer recommends it, **rotate the mattress every three months** to even out wear.

3 > To freshen a mattress, **sprinkle it with baking soda**, let it sit, then vacuum.

Topper lowdown

Integrated pillow tops are giving way to free-floating toppers that are purchased separately. While they can be pricey, they are a way to experiment with new-age options like gel honeycombs (IntelliBed) or plastic yarn spun into washable springy slabs (Airweave). Note: You still need a good-quality support layer underneath.

SHOULD YOU FLIP?

When the top and bottom layers are the same, a mattress can be flipped, extending its life. Some traditional companies, like Shifman, still make them this way. But most mattresses today have only one comfort layer, so flipping won't work. Be sure to ask what the maker recommends.

THE FINE PRINT

Before you commit, pin down any delivery costs, and ask if the dealer will also whisk away your old mattress. Most mattresses come with a friendly-sounding policy on returns, or a so-called comfort guarantee. But read carefully: You may have only one month to exercise this option, and you may have to pay for shipping or a restocking fee even if you do return the mattress within the set time.

Long-term warranties (typically 10 to 20 years) guard against lumps, sags, and trenches—but with certain conditions.

> The warranty may apply only if you use a certain foundation. (See "Add a Base," opposite.)

> You may not get a full refund. And a lump or other problem may not qualify as a defect if it's deemed too small.

> You may need your original receipt—and the "Do Not Remove" tag that comes with the mattress, which could contain key product information. For instance, to exercise IKEA's generous 25-year warranty, you have to bring the receipt—and the mattress—back to the store.

PILLOW TALK

Now that you've found a mattress that keeps your spine aligned, don't forget the supporting player: a pillow that will continue that alignment by keeping cricks out of your neck. Unfortunately, pillows generally don't come with comfort guarantees, and it may take a few tries to get the combination of softness and support that's right for you. Now all you need is the perfect set of sheets.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

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How to install a no-sweat backsplash

Use a peel-and-stick tile mat instead of messing with thinset and a trowel

BY SAL VAGLICA • PHOTOGRAPHS BY KOLIN SMITH

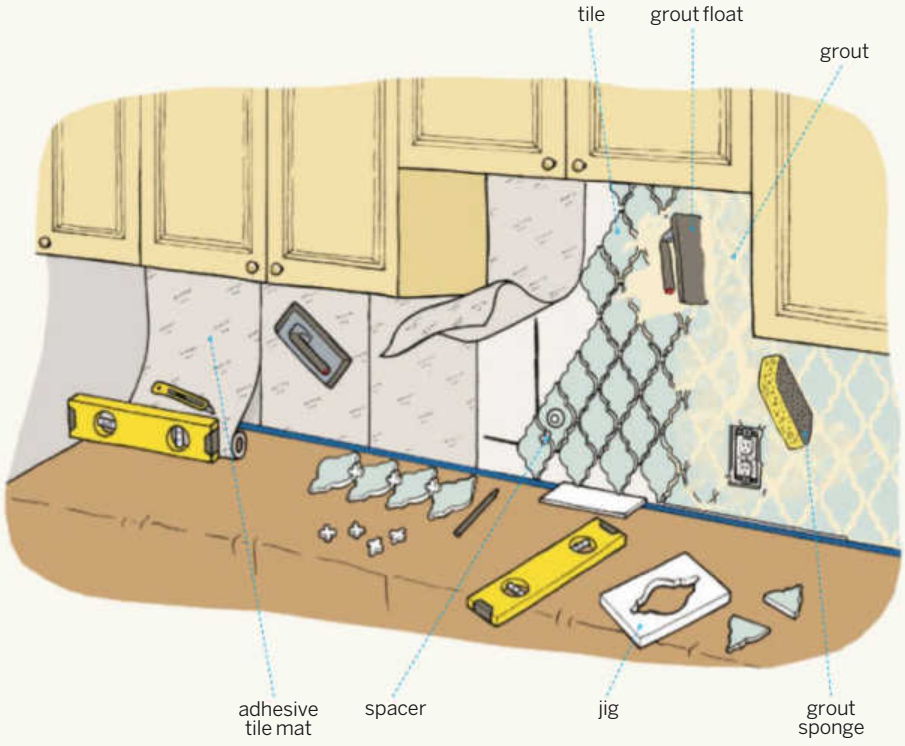
COST $440 for 20 square feet
TIME Two days
DIFFICULTY Easy to moderate, depending on the tile shape. Here, getting nonrectangular tiles plumb requires extra effort.

ADDING A NEW TILE BACKSPLASH can completely refresh a kitchen's look without busting the budget, and you don't have to master troweling thinset to do it. We skipped that step altogether and used a sticky tile mat—think industrial-strength double-sided tape—that tenaciously grabs both tile and drywall, as well as existing tile or laminate. It makes for particularly quick work with square or rectangular tiles or those bound to mesh backing, though our choice of a curvaceous individual field tile ratcheted up the degree of difficulty. But the point remains, as *This Old House* senior technical editor Mark Powers demonstrates on the following pages. That is, the peel-and-stick mat goes up in minutes, so you can focus on the important part—setting the tile.

Tile: Capriccio Arabesco, $17.40 per square foot; annsacks.com. Adhesive: MusselBound Adhesive Tile Mat, $28 for 15 square feet; musselbound.com. Grout: Fusion Pro, $55 per gallon; homedepot.com. Cabinet hardware: Bristol Smoked 1⅜-inch-diameter knobs, $19 apiece; rejuvenation.com. Faucet: Brantford pull-down kitchen faucet with MotionSense, $705; moen.com

DAY-TO-DAY TIMELINE

SATURDAY Install the mat and set the full tiles (Steps 1–4).
SUNDAY Fill in the partial tiles and grout (Steps 5–7).



TOOLS

- **12-inch level**
- **breakaway knife**
- **hard-rubber grout float**
- **tape measure**
- **felt-tip marker**
- **suction cup**
- **5-in-1 tool**
- **wax pencil**
- **tile saw** Rent one for about $50 per day.
- **combination square**
- **grout sponge**
- **5-gallon buckets** Get two.
- **microfiber cloth**
- **caulk gun**

MATERIALS

- **builder's paper**
- **painter's tape**
- **adhesive tile mat** Get enough for the backsplash plus 10 percent more for waste.
- **tile** Order enough for the backsplash plus 15 percent more for waste.
- **⅜-inch tile spacers**
- **grout** Get enough to cover the area of your backsplash.
- **¾-inch-thick foam** Get enough to make at least two jigs that are larger than a tile.
- **caulk** Get enough to cover the seam between countertop and backsplash.

1 Install the mat

A] Adhere the first section. To prep, cut the power to the backsplash outlets, clean the wall with degreaser, and protect the countertop with builder's paper or cardboard. Now, starting at a corner, stick the mat to the top of the wall under the cabinet, pressing the corners in place lightly so they can be repositioned if necessary. Square up the mat along the corner, then touch it to the wall, working from the top down to avoid creating air bubbles. Use a level or straightedge and a breakaway knife to trim the bottom at the countertop.

B] Place the other sections. Position and trim the next section of mat the same way. To reposition a section, gently lift it off the wall by hand—it'll stick to any tool. Continue, covering the entire backsplash. Use a grout float to squeegee out any air bubbles, then press on each section of mat for 5 seconds, bonding it to the wall.

ILLUSTRATION: GREGORY NEMEC

2 Determine the layout

A] Dry-fit the pattern. Measure and mark the center of the backsplash's feature wall—in this case, the sink wall—on the painter's tape. (We removed the faucet to allow more working room.) Center a tile at the mark. Start laying out tiles to one side, using spacers between them, to see where the last tile in the row lands. The feature wall tile will butt into the tile of the adjacent wall, so place a tile on edge to account for that.

B] Measure the gap. When you reach the corner and can't place another full tile, measure the gap to the tile on the adjacent wall. Subtract the width of the spacer (⅜ inch in this case).

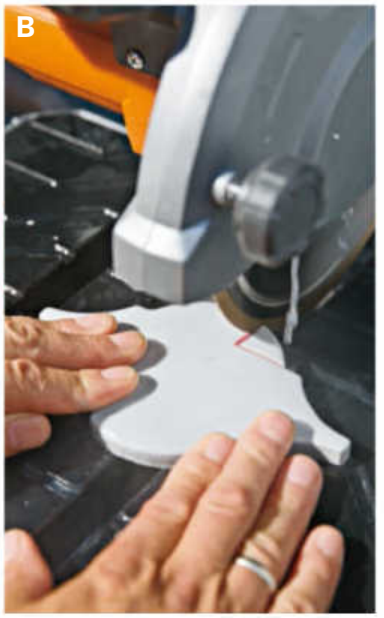
C] Adjust and test. Use the measurement to shift the centerline, if necessary, to finish the course with tiles of at least a half width. Make a new mark for the adjusted centerline, as shown, and lay out the tiles again to make sure the last tile lands the way you like. Finish dry-fitting the other half of the row and check that the last tile will be more than a sliver. Rather than centering the pattern top to bottom, we wanted to start with a full tile at the countertop (allowing for a caulk line). This minimizes the number of tiles that need to be cut.

TIP Use a suction cup to get a good grip on non-rectangular tiles, so you can set each one where it belongs the first time (unlike thinset, the adhesive mat doesn't allow for adjustments in-place).

3 Start tiling

A] Transfer the new layout line. Peel the lining from the mat just above the new centerline. Lightly place a level plumb with the mark and carry the line up the backsplash. Use a piece of thin scrap or cardboard on the countertop as a spacer for the caulk line. Then measure the height of a tile, divide it in half, and measure up from the spacer that distance along the plumb line. Use the level to make a perpendicular line, creating a crosshair for the first tile.

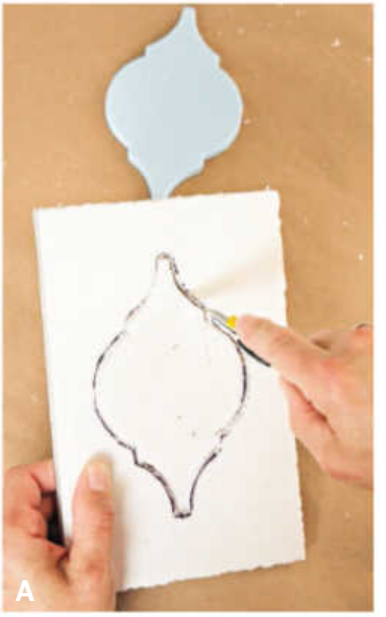
B] Establish the pattern. Center the first tile on the crosshair, then tap the top and bottom to tack it in place on the mat. Reposition tiles by prying them off with a 5-in-1 tool. Use spacers to line up and place adjacent tiles, building the pattern up and out from the first tile.



4 Work around outlets

A] Mark the tile. When you reach an outlet, hold the tile in position by tacking one edge to the mat against spacers. Use a wax pencil to mark where the tile overlaps the receptacle box.

B] Trim tile to fit. To cut the notch, use the tile saw to make two straight cuts, one along each wax pencil line, until they meet. Flip the tile facedown and complete the cuts. If the connection isn't perfect, don't worry: That corner will be covered by the receptacle plate.



5 Fill in partial tiles

A] Make a jig. Once you've filled in all the full tiles along one wall, you can cut and install the partial tiles. First cut a rectangle from a piece of foam to use as a jig, preserving at least one corner from the factory edges. Place a tile on the foam and center it using the combination square, by making sure the border of the jig is equal on opposite sides of the tile. Outline the tile with the felt-tip marker. Use a breakaway knife to cut out the shape.

B] Cut tiles. Measure the spaces for the bottom row of half tiles from the caulk-line spacer to the tile above. Subtract the width of your tile spacers, and mark the tile. Place it in the jig, with the factory corner nestled where the saw's fence meets the edge of the table. Push the tile through the blade, holding the foam jig in place if necessary.

C] Place half tiles. Stick a spacer to the mat beneath the tile above, as shown, and touch the tip of the half tile to the mat. Then place a second spacer between the half tile and its neighbor. Press the bottom of the half tile against the mat.

TIP To prevent chip-out, adjust the depth of the saw blade so that the abrasive band just slices through the bottom of the tile.

6 Turn the corner

A] Measure for the last tile. Measure between the last tile in the course and a tile standing in for those that will cover the adjacent wall, as shown. Subtract the width of the grout-line spacer.

B] Transfer the mark. Set a combination square to that measurement, strike a line on a full tile, then use a vertically oriented jig to cut it—but don't set the partial tile. You'll cut and set its mating piece first, which keeps the corner joint less conspicuous.

C] Start the return wall. The exposed faces of the two pieces that form the corner should add up to the width of one full tile. To mark the return piece without measuring, stack the partial tile on it and mark along the cut edge. Then adjust the cutline to make the return tile wider by the thickness of the tile, to create a butt joint. Cut the tile and set it into the corner. Then add the last piece of the feature wall to complete the corner. Finish the feature wall by cutting the rest of the corner tiles the same way. To start the return wall, add a spacer to the first return tile, then measure off that to make new layout lines.

SEE HOW IT'S DONE To watch a video of this backsplash installation, go to **thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2016**

7 Grout the tile

A] Trowel on grout. Once you finish placing all your tiles, use the rubber grout float to set them—pressing each one for 5 seconds. Use a grout sponge and water to moisten the surface of as much tile as you can grout in 5 minutes. Spread the grout, approaching the joints at a diagonal while holding the float at about 45° to the backsplash. Work the grout into the joints, then pull diagonally across the tiles to remove the excess.

B] Sponge tiles clean. Wet a sponge in a bucket of clean water and clean grout and residue off the tiles with a circular motion, then rinse the sponge in a second bucket. Take care not to wipe so aggressively that you pull grout out of the joints. Rinse and repeat with fresh water until any haze is gone and the moisture left on the tiles is clear. Then wrap a clean sponge in a microfiber cloth and blot the backsplash dry. Continue grouting in sections. Use textured acrylic caulk the color of the grout to fill the seam between the tile and countertop.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

DETAIL WORK

A period-sensitive redo highlights the original woodwork—and charm—of a unique 1850s house

By **Deborah Baldwin** • Photographs by **John Gruen** • Styling by **Ingrid Leess**

ABOVE: The towered Italianate, with its low-pitched roof and 1860 clapboard wing, stayed in the same family nearly 160 years before new owners salvaged and rebuilt it.

OPPOSITE: Craftsmen smoothed the original plaster and parquet in the dining room and polished up the ornate Greek Revival casing and window trim.

DETAIL WORK

Homeowners Donald Ross and Helen Klein Ross found striking white-ash-and-mahogany parquet floors under decades of grime, and luminous fruitwood trim under layers of paint. The couple set aside this room, on the ground floor of the octagonal tower, as a showcase for artifacts unearthed during the redo.

It's hard to explain an infatuation, especially when the love object is a house. By definition, *infatuated* means irrational—it comes from the Latin, "made a fool of"—and seems apt for various owners of an 1853 folly in Salisbury, Connecticut, called Holleywood, after the pocket-knife baron who built it.

LEFT: The living room has a working fireplace and a ceiling-high glass-front bookcase, a gift to the original owner, Alexander Holley.

BELOW: After Alexander was twice widowed, he married his third wife, Sarah Day. They added on to the house and moved the three-story staircase from the front to the back of the center hall so that it wouldn't interrupt traffic flow when Holley, newly elected governor, was having people in.

Shop TOH
For similar furnishings, visit **wayfair.com/detailwork**

Call him "house obsessed." Enamored of Renaissance-style Tuscan villas, Alexander Holley had to have one of his own, complete with turret and Juliet balcony. As for the equally eccentric woman he married three years later, who promptly uprooted the gorgeous three-story front-hall staircase as part of a major redo, a better term might be "house mad."

The next wave of home improvements came in 1915, when one of the Holley heirs brought plumbing indoors, electrified the lights, and swapped out the front doors for something equally modern. During the heady days of the late 1960s, another heir went at the kitchen, lowering the ceiling and burying a pantry behind a wall of trendy metal cabinets.

Luckily, though, down through the years much of the original layout and detail remained intact, including the arched crowns and crossetted corners that wrap first-floor openings and sky-high windows like frosting piped around a wedding cake. Still, it is a big house even by today's standards, built with nine bedrooms and something like 12,000 square feet, making it hard to heat and expensive to maintain—not everyone's idea, in other words, of a cozy forever house.

Which brings us to Helen Klein Ross and Donald Ross, by all accounts levelheaded empty-nesters—he a lawyer, she a novelist, with two grown daughters—who found themselves sizing up Holleywood on a lark about four years ago and suddenly signing

papers to make it their own. Helen fell fast. "Rumor had it that it was a teardown," she recalls. "I could see its original grandeur underneath the holes and watermarks and wallpaper damage. I could see what it could be."

The couple had been introduced to the house by their general contractors, Robert Anderson and Ellen Burcroff, and their architect, Frank Garretson, who all recall Helen's instant, well, infatuation. "But you should have seen Donald's face," Anderson says, conceding that the drafty old house was "in really bad shape, and overwhelming."

Gradually, the resident skeptic came around: The limestone foundation was sound, the basement dry, and the chance to revive the villa's style and glory irresistible. Sitting on eight acres in the scenic Lakeville area, Holleywood was poised to become a road-trip magnet for friends, family, and historic-house fans. Fixing it up could be a project; it could be fun.

Coincidentally, Anderson, Burcroff, and Garretson were just mopping up a renovation at the couple's former forever house nearby. "We were putting in a kitchen, transforming a shed into a writing room for me, getting things we'd wanted for years," Helen recalls. "We were almost finished...."

Though the couple held onto that house three more years, the team's focus swiftly shifted to Holleywood, where at first all thought they were looking at a mainly cosmetic job. "It appears that only two of the rooms require renovation: The kitchen needs updating and the master bedroom needs its own bathroom," Helen noted in a blog she began after the initial walkthrough. "The rest of the rooms will be cleaned and painted and left otherwise untouched, to preserve the integrity of the house. And also our solvency."

Wishful thinking?

Anderson and Burcroff, partners for more than 30 years, are in such demand that they don't bid on jobs, preferring a pay-as-you-go policy, which turned out to be the right idea here. Who, after all, could have predicted almost two years of heavy lifting and gentle handling, not to mention extraordinary attention to detail and more than two dozen subcontractors?

Holleywood's comeback, Helen says succinctly now, "unfolded little by little."

It began in that bone-dry basement, where Anderson, a dedicated repurposer, found a working oil burner and a trove of useful materials, including the original front doors. Garretson, a fellow old-house zealot, got caught up in the detective work, matching the doors to a 1908 photo and identifying an original interior opening hidden in a wall. Helen used her blog to document Holleywood's past and its rebirth, interlacing the names of Holley family members and latter-day members of the crew.

The team left the layout pretty much as it was, simply adding two and a half baths, converting a bedroom into a laundry room, and fixing other loose ends. But the scope of the redo somehow grew and grew. Wiring, pipes, and roofing had to be replaced, chimneys rebuilt, and a kitchen built from scratch.

Each week seemed to yield some interesting new find. One day, while poking around in a crawl space over a china closet, Anderson spotted remnants of an Italianate frieze. Today, dinner guests like to peer in there and catch sight of it with a mirror.

Such discoveries energized the team's weekly meetings and also widened its circle of specialized subcontractors. Floor buffs arrived to refinish the first-floor parquet and laboriously hand-scrape hundreds of square feet of painted hickory on the second floor—a mechanical sander there would have destroyed the flooring's rustic flavor, Anderson explains. A hardware preservationist slow-cooked the paint off hundreds of hinges, knobs, and pulls; a master carpenter filled gaps in the spiral staircase's balustrade with quartersawn cherry to match.

To protect the ancient, imperfect walls, workers cut holes for pipes and wiring by hand and kept insulation to a minimum. A pair of third-generation plasterers worked their way up and down and across the house, painstakingly raking, then pinning the plaster to pre–Civil War lath before mending it with fiberglass mesh and plastering again, keeping the walls' settled, uneven look. Windows—there are 103—were taken apart and sashes repaired; ornate cast-iron radiators were refinished and rejiggered so they no longer bang.

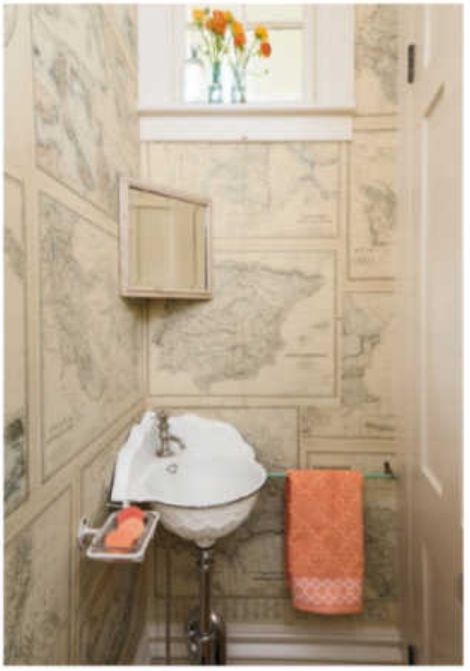
You've heard of shopping your closet? Picture a 20-room spree. Light fixtures were rewired and rehung in new spots. A 1915 Mott tub was unearthed and moved to a new wall in what became the master bath, and a sink and windows collecting dust in the

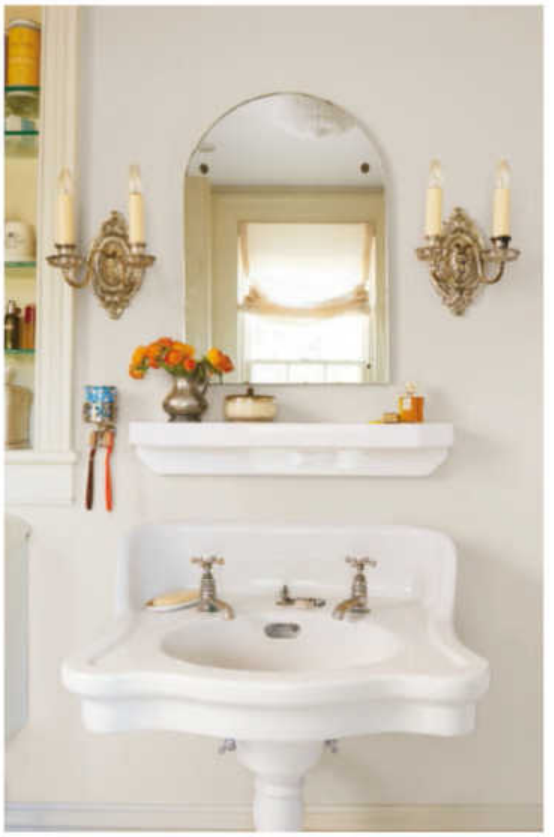
OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT: The winding cherry balustrade was repaired, stripped, oiled—three times—and waxed. RIGHT: The front parlor's substantial molding, baseboards, and trim include elliptical casing against the far wall, possibly at one time an opening within a ballroom. Paint colors throughout are custom blends based on historic palettes.

MIDDLE LEFT: A small powder room, squeezed under the stairs in 1915, was refinished with a salvaged sink and 1870s British maps. CENTER: Homeowners Donald and Helen gaze up the restored staircase from the first floor. RIGHT: The living room still has its original oversize windows and shutters that fold into recesses behind the casings.

BOTTOM LEFT: The kitchen was gutted, then rebuilt with cabinets handcrafted from salvaged Douglas fir. Finishes include beefy soapstone countertops and 1920s subway tile. RIGHT: A walk-in pantry off the kitchen has its original shelves and glass-front cabinets. *Tile: Demolition Depot. Pendant lights: PW Vintage Lighting. Range and range hood: DCS. Knobs and pulls: Whitechapel Ltd.*

PHOTO: (OPPOSITE PAGE, CENTER) JANE BEILES FOR *THE NEW YORK TIMES*





basement found their way into a breakfast room and adjacent potting area.

When forced to look farther afield, the team sought out salvaged materials and new ones made to look old. A crate of vintage subway tile landed in the kitchen, salvaged wavy glass replaced 260 broken panes, and handmade bricks with natural color variations helped two new chimneys blend in.

While a number of subs set up workshops in the vast basement, where they could plug in their power tools, Anderson—who, incidentally, eschews computers, e-mail, and cell phones—migrated to the side porch, where he built kitchen cabinets from salvaged Douglas fir, hand-planing the lumber for a more crafted look and fashioning paneled doors to showcase vertical and flat grain.

Electric, phone, and cable wires disappeared underground. A metal roof and copper gutters fell in place. After much discussion, storm windows went up in back, leaving the front to look as it always has. The main exterior, still finished with Holley's concoction of mortar, gravel, and paint, stood strong—relatively speaking. Guests park their shoes at the door to avoid shedding stucco inside.

ABOVE LEFT: Crowned arched windows on the second floor look out on the front yard. The homeowners scoured tag sales for antiques like the butler's chest.

ABOVE RIGHT: Salvaged pedestal sinks, taps, and sconces underscore the period spirit of the new master bath.

If you include painters, landscapers, et al., Anderson figures the remodel absorbed about 10,000 man-hours, or a few more than predicted. When it was all over, the homeowners threw a party for their army of enablers, followed by a reception for Holley family descendants living nearby. Friends and family, who had gathered for Thanksgiving the first year in and hunkered down at picnic tables in their overcoats, now warm themselves before functioning fireplaces augmented by ample steam heat.

Working with interior designer Chris Brennan, who specializes in historic homes, the couple finished the house with vintage finds and reproduction lighting to complement the existing. Today, with five baths, three half baths, and eight bedrooms, there's plenty of room for extended-family reunions.

Donald has a second-floor office with lake views, and Helen a writer's retreat tucked into the tower. "What's interesting is that as soon as I began working in the house, I had a story, and something about the house allowed it to expand into a novel," Helen says. Titled *What Was Mine,* it's due out this year, coinciding with Holleywood's 163rd anniversary. Just possibly it's an unexpected love story. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

The 1915 tub, previously set into a wall in the former hall bath, shifted position to become a centerpiece in the new master bath. A new marble sill doubles as a shelf for bath supplies. *Floor tile: American Olean*

20 easy ways to get Old-House Charm

Vintage homes earn their appeal over centuries. Don't have 100 years to spare? These **modern versions of period details** give the same look without the wait (or cost)

by Sal Vaglica

Ceiling medallions

The look: An architectural detail used purely for decoration by American colonists took on a practical purpose in Victorian-era homes: concealing the holes required to retrofit hanging gaslighted fixtures. They add texture and shadow lines, but even by today's standards plaster medallions are a luxury, and they need to be installed by a skilled craftsman, which can be costly.

The shortcut: Polyurethane medallions made from molds have all the detail of plaster but very little of the weight. Installing one—either for decoration only or to hide an electrical box—requires just a few beads of construction adhesive.

Shown: A medallion with a pronounced leaf detail (above, small) suits an Italianate or a Second Empire home. For a Greek Revival, cove circles (medium) or flatter acanthus leaves (large) make a better match with the interior molding. **$13–$65; ekenamillwork.com**

TIP: To replicate the texture of real plaster, mix joint compound with water until it reaches a pancake-batter consistency, then brush it onto the medallion before installing it.

Brick walls

The look: Colonists initially built chimneys with clay bricks, and the material's varying tones, from red to blue-black, appear in nearly every architectural style that followed.

The shortcut: These ½-inch-thick veneers are glued to a mesh backing that bonds to drywall like tile—no masonry skill, cement mixing, or troweling required.

Shown: Dark bricks, like these in Café Mocha (below right, top), spent a lot of time close to the fire and were often used in Colonial and Gothic Revival homes. The red hues of the bricks on this sheet of Dixie Clay (bottom) come from southern Utah sand, but the classic color fits in houses of any region or style. **$9.30 per square foot; installbrickweb.com**

TIP: Skip renting a tile saw—cut the bricks with a circular saw fitted with a diamond blade and plugged into a GFCI outlet. Use a pierced water bottle to dribble water onto the blade to keep dust down while cutting.

PHOTOS: (DINING ROOM) WENDELL T. WEBBER; (MEDALLIONS, BRICKS) BURCU AVSAR; (HOME OFFICE) DAVID MEREWETHER/IPC+ SYNDICATION

Ceiling tiles

The look: Stamped steel came into fashion when Victorian homeowners used panels as a less expensive way to mimic decorative plaster (itself a less expensive way to get the look of carved wood or stone) while providing some fire protection. It's an example of the age-old practice of replicating vintage charm with newfangled materials.

The shortcut: PVC and foam tiles express all the embossed detail of metal but can be trimmed with a utility knife and stuck to the ceiling with adhesive. Which is to say, the work goes much faster than using metal snips and nails.

Shown: La Scala's PVC rosette pattern (above left) uses two shades of antiqued copper for a Victorian-era look; **$5.50 per square foot**. The raised leaf motif of the Styrofoam Chestnut Grove panel (above right) is typical of Greek Revival interiors. **$1.50 per square foot; both, decorativeceilingtiles.net**

Wide-plank floors

The look: The new machines of the Industrial Revolution gave owners of Italianate and Gothic Revival homes some of the first uniformly milled tongue-and-groove wood floors. Hardwood has ranked high on the charm list ever since, but the real thing isn't always a sensible choice in hardworking kitchens.

The shortcut: Planks of porcelain tile shrug off scratches and spills and owe their realistic wood look to an ink-jet printer that uses two or three layers of glazing (depending on the wood species) to mimic flatsawn boards.

Shown: This 6-by-36-inch tile replicates the warm tones of stained hardwood and comes in 25 other shades. **$3.60 per square foot; lumberliquidators.com**

TIP: To create the natural look of random-length wood planks, be sure to stagger the joints at least 12 inches course to course.

Kitchen countertops

The look: By the 1800s, countertop materials such as marble and soapstone started replacing wood in kitchens along the East Coast. Stone, while durable, requires care to guard against staining.

The shortcut: Laminate, which costs about half what real stone does and needs little maintenance, has upped its faux-stone cred with realistic rounded or beveled edges—no more brown seams. That makes it a dead ringer for what might have been in a 19th-century kitchen.

Shown: The veining on this faux-marble Calcutta (above left) is evenly spread throughout the slab, an improvement on the real thing. Laminate soapstone (above right) doesn't require oiling. **About $33 per square foot, installed; wilsonart.com**

TIP: Remove stubborn stains from laminate by letting undiluted bleach sit for up to two minutes; then rinse with warm water, and dry.

Decorative plaster walls

The look: During the Renaissance, thrifty Italian plasterers replicated the color variation of stone, using inexpensive materials like marble dust, to elevate the material's finish. The trend caught on stateside after an 1850 stylebook changed the way craftsmen finished plaster, and the look evolved. The real deal involves a pro troweling the finish onto the wall, blending in pigments to get a depth of color, then leveling the surface smooth.

The shortcut: You can pull off a similar effect by spreading two coats of specialty paint with a putty knife, producing a finish adaptable enough to blend in with everything from old-world interiors to the stuccoed rooms of the Southwest.

Shown: Applying two base coats of regular paint plus two top coats of this faux finish creates a wall with subtle variations in texture and color. **$130 to finish 400 square feet; homedepot.com**

TIP: To distribute the top coat evenly, hold the kit's plastic knife at an angle to the wall, and keep a rag handy to wipe off any clumps that dry on the tool's edge.

PHOTOS: (KITCHEN) ANDREA RUGG FOR REHKAMP LARSON ARCHITECTS; (LAMINATE SAMPLES) TED MORRISON; (TABLE) DAVID BRITTAIN/IPC+ SYNDICATION; (OPPOSITE PAGE, LAUNDRY ROOM) ERIC PIASECKI/OTTO; (TILES, BOARDS) TED MORRISON; (KITCHEN) GORDON GREGORY PHOTOGRAPHY FOR GRAHAM GOFF ARCHITECTURE

Claw-foot tubs

The look: What started as a Victorian-era invention, bonding porcelain to cast iron, became a bathroom standard after World War I, when easy-to-clean 300-pound claw-foot tubs graced many homes of the era, such as Colonial Revivals, Tudors, and Neoclassicals. Charming as these tubs are, they're not exactly easy to haul upstairs.

The shortcut: Wallet-friendly and lightweight, an acrylic tub takes the same classic shape and is easier on your floor joists.

Shown: This 60-pound version has details like chrome ball-and-claw feet, and because the color is solid throughout, scratches tend not to show. **$890, including tub filler; vintagetub.com**

Crown moldings

The look: The Colonial Revival style borrowed heavily from earlier Georgian and Federal prototypes and often showcased rich-looking wood cornices built up in layers, miter by miter.

The shortcut: This molding's extruded-foam body has the crisp details and shadow lines of a stepped wood crown, but it comes as one piece. The profile's coating, a mix of fiberglass and acrylic plaster, takes paint well and shrinks less than wood, keeping miters tight. It adheres to the ceiling with dabs of joint compound, which also fills and hides seams—no nails required.

Shown: These profiles range from 5 to 9 inches tall and are appropriate for Colonial Revival and Craftsman-style rooms with ceilings up to 9 feet high. Starting at **$1.85 per linear foot; canamould.com**

Radiused moldings

The look: Arched interior openings date back to the Federal style but became more common after industrialization gave us circular saws and milling machines, making carved and bent wood easier to produce. Today, finishing curves with wood molding is an expensive and time-consuming process that requires relief cuts or steam bending to build up the look in layers.

The shortcut: Rubber profiles easily bend around curves, you can use traditional tools to install them, and they take paint and stain well. All of which makes them typically less expensive than using real wood.

Shown: Rubber molding can be ordered to match any style; the repeating leaf pattern here suits a Victorian-era archway. **$11 per linear foot; flextrim.com**

TIP: Flexible molding is easier to work when it's warm. Make it pliable by letting it sit in the sun or heating it in an oven to 80°F.

PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT) SUSAN SEUBERT; TED MORRISON (2); ROBIN STUBBERT/GAP INTERIORS; (OPPOSITE PAGE, SYNTHETIC SLATE ROOF) JIM WESTPHALEN/COLLINSTOCK; (SYNTHETIC SLATE TILES, DECORATIVE BRACKET) TED MORRISON; (HOUSE EXTERIOR) ANDREA RUGG FOR SCIORA DESIGN/BUILD

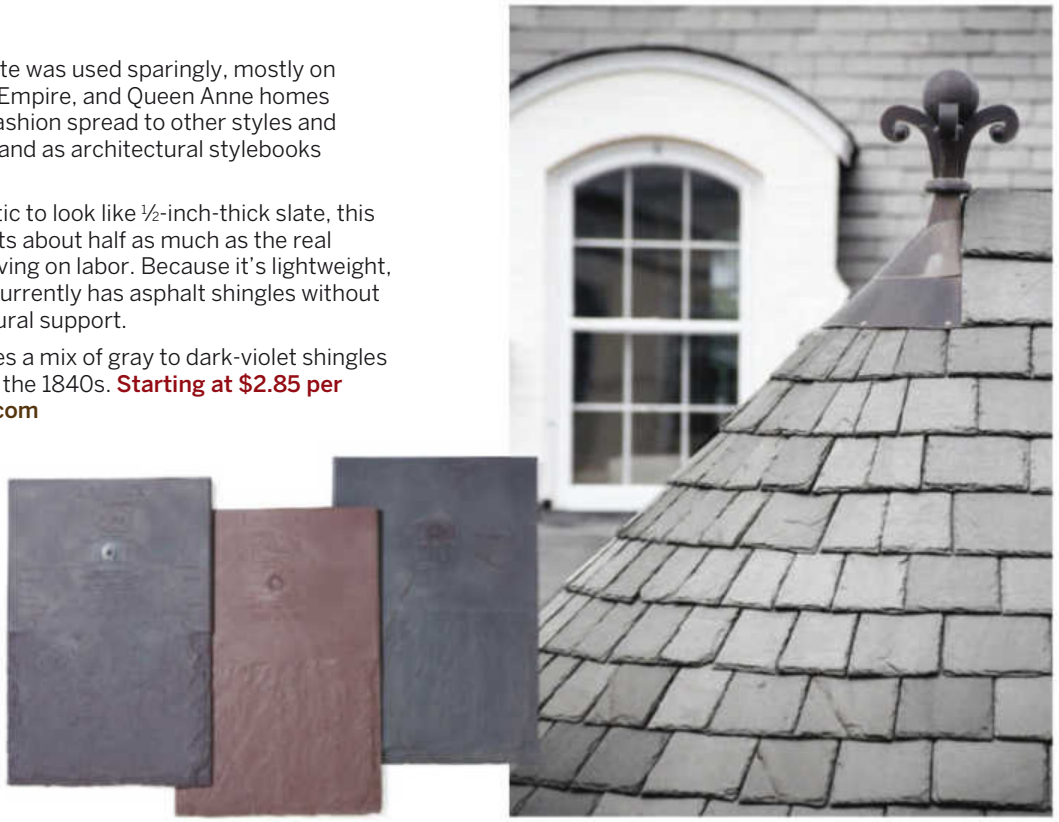
Roofing tiles

The look: Until the Civil War, slate was used sparingly, mostly on important Greek Revival, Second Empire, and Queen Anne homes located near a slate source. The fashion spread to other styles and regions as more quarries opened and as architectural stylebooks began drawing attention to it.

The shortcut: Made from plastic to look like ½-inch-thick slate, this crack-proof synthetic version costs about half as much as the real thing, and installation is faster, saving on labor. Because it's lightweight, this slate can replace a roof that currently has asphalt shingles without the need for any additional structural support.

Shown: The European blend uses a mix of gray to dark-violet shingles for a look commonly used around the 1840s. **Starting at $2.85 per square foot; davinciroofscapes.com**

TIP: Synthetic slate comes in 50 standard colors. Here's what you need to know to keep it real: Northeastern Greek Revivals used black or gray slate. Gothic Revival and many Victorian styles mixed up to four different colors. Italianates often had reddish-clay-colored slate.



Decorative brackets

The look: Brackets turn up in many architectural styles. Second Empire homes had beefy ornamental ones tucked under mansard roofs, while a simple 4×4 style was a common detail on many later Craftsman homes.

The shortcut: Adding these nonstructural details is a lot easier when they're made from low-maintenance, lightweight polyurethane and require only a few screws and some construction adhesive to install.

Shown: This chunky silhouette features an embossed wood grain that would fit right into a Craftsman home's porch or under its gable ends. **$93; fypon.com**

TIP: Use an acrylic gel stain instead of a traditional liquid stain to grab the ridges better on textured polyurethane parts.

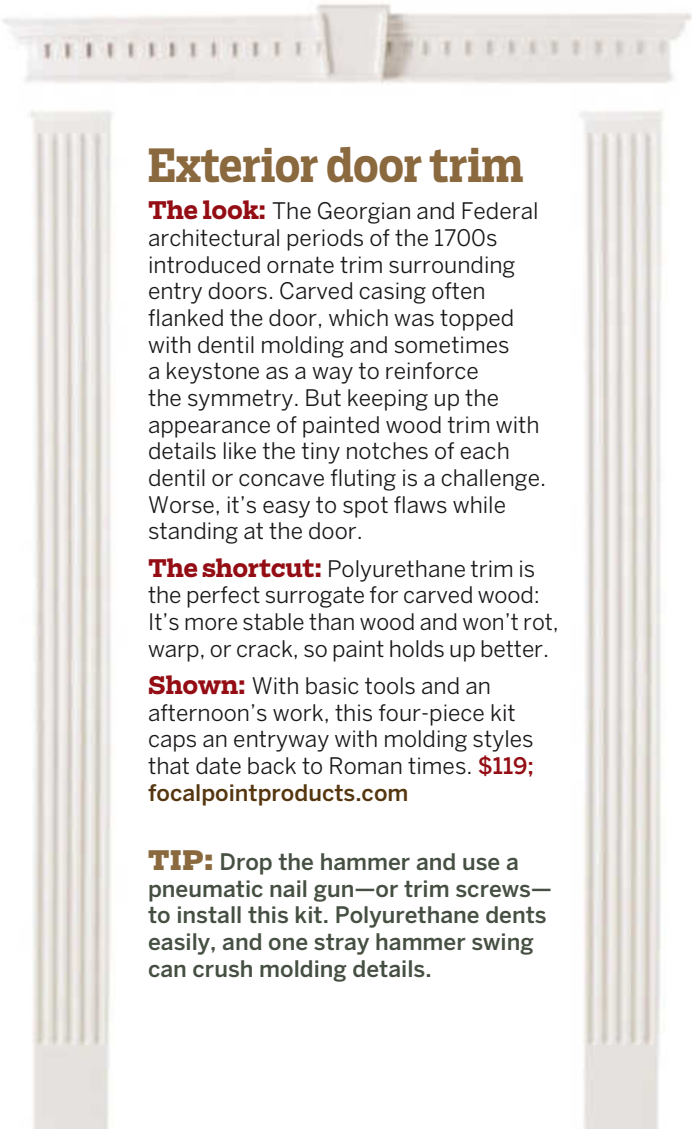
Shingle siding

The look: Multiple colors of brightly painted cedar shingles are commonly associated with Queen Anne homes, but the look stuck around through the Craftsman period in the early 20th century. It takes upkeep to prevent paint from peeling, and stained shingles require recoating every 4 to 10 years to keep the color uniform.

The shortcut: PVC shingles, milled with crisp details to mimic the real thing, mean less maintenance, and the Sherwin-Williams finish is covered by a 25-year warranty.

Shown: For a more reserved option, side your home with shingles in a single color, like this gray Mystic Haze, one of 18 shades. **$6.50 per square foot; nucedar.com**

TIP: For the most traditional look, install shingles with a 5-inch exposure on each course.



Exterior door trim

The look: The Georgian and Federal architectural periods of the 1700s introduced ornate trim surrounding entry doors. Carved casing often flanked the door, which was topped with dentil molding and sometimes a keystone as a way to reinforce the symmetry. But keeping up the appearance of painted wood trim with details like the tiny notches of each dentil or concave fluting is a challenge. Worse, it's easy to spot flaws while standing at the door.

The shortcut: Polyurethane trim is the perfect surrogate for carved wood: It's more stable than wood and won't rot, warp, or crack, so paint holds up better.

Shown: With basic tools and an afternoon's work, this four-piece kit caps an entryway with molding styles that date back to Roman times. **$119; focalpointproducts.com**

TIP: Drop the hammer and use a pneumatic nail gun—or trim screws—to install this kit. Polyurethane dents easily, and one stray hammer swing can crush molding details.

Carriage doors

The look: Until the early 20th century, it was common to shelter a horse and carriage in an outbuilding with swing-out wood doors made with exposed X-shaped or diagonal bracing and hand-forged hardware.

The shortcut: Composite roll-up versions have all the energy efficiency of a modern, insulated garage door but use a frame-and-panel design made from stained, maintenance-free materials and cost only 10 percent more than a cedar door.

Shown: The hardware, arched windows, and bracing of the Canyon Ridge Ultra-Grain steel and composite carriage-house door would be right at home on a Victorian-era garage. **Starting at $2,200 for a single-car door, uninstalled; clopaydoor.com**

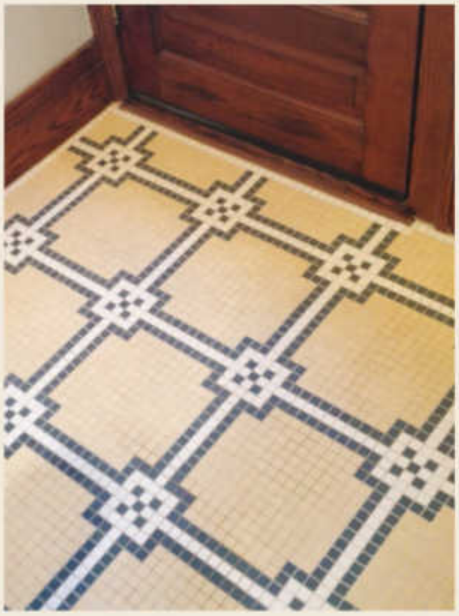
FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

The Real McCoys

Some details got it just right the first time around. Meet 5 vintage touches that we think are too good to fake

Glass-shade ceiling fixture

This reproduction light is a style that was popular in kitchens from 1921 until after World War II because it mixed Colonial-era styling, like scallop and bead details, with a stamped-brass body, which kept the price affordable. **$109; rejuvenation.com**



Mosaic floor tile

Many floor mosaics from the Victorian era to the mid-1930s used a small hexagon, square, or penny-round tile to create patterns found in catalogs. These porcelain mosaics are made to the same specs today. **$20 per square foot; heritagetile.com**

Shop TOH
Find more easy ways to get old-house charm at **wayfair.com/oldhousecharm**

Twist doorbell

Connecticut-based P&F Corbin Company manufactured details like the twist doorbell into the 1900s. This solid-brass replica has the same pattern as the original and mounts to the door's stile. **$69; houseofantiquehardware.com**

Hardwood floor medallion

The original inlays had parts cut and installed by hand, patterned after the medallion quilts of the early 1800s. This hardwood version is hand-assembled from computer-cut parts. **From $580; oshkoshdesigns.com**

Pedestal sink

The stepped basin, sweeping pedestal, and bright chrome faucet on this vitreous-china sink replicate the luxurious look of a 1930s Art Deco bathroom. **$435; deabath.com**

Newel post

In the early 20th century the newel post became broader, with a hollow core that replaced turned wood. This red oak post's true floating panel matches a late-Victorian or early–Arts and Crafts interior. **$210; westfirestairparts.com**

PHOTOS: (DOORBELL) TED MORRISON; (OPPOSITE PAGE, PVC SHINGLE) TED MORRISON

NOT YOUR BASIC BOOKCASE

Sure, you can pick up some knock-together set of shelves, but built-ins provide so much more than just a place to stash your stuff. Made to rise ceiling high, create an alcove for furniture, or wrap an existing nook, they can add style, charm, and architecture to an interior, all while offering custom storage and display space. ***Here, seven ways to make them special***

By Katherine Pushkar

LIBRARY STYLE

Bookcases arranged to form a passageway and united with flat trim create a mini library, complete with a rolling ladder that beckons young readers to hunt for a good book on the topmost shelves. Designer Bret Franks came up with the idea as a way to add old-house character to a new farmhouse with a completely open first floor beyond this office space. Apple-green backing keeps the built-ins fun and family-friendly, as does the mix of objects dotting the adjustable-height shelves. The poplar boxes are screwed into the walls and ceiling, with flat poplar stock edging the thin ¾-inch MDF shelves for a heftier appearance and creating panel details along the bottoms and sides. The top and bottom are wrapped with the same moldings that rim the ceiling and floor, completing the built-in look. A ladder made from a kit slides along a circular rail secured with brackets to a special facing that conceals a beefed-up support.

PHOTO: MARK LOHMAN. STYLING: SUNDAY HENDRICKSON

Architecture

WHAT SIZE SHELVES TO BUILD?

Take stock of what you'll be storing on them: trim travel guides or oversize art books, bulky board games or lidded baskets, collectibles large or small. Most shelves are built a minimum of 11 to 12 inches deep, but this is your chance to customize: **Go for it!**

HAPPY LANDING

As part of the expansion of a 1915 Dutch Colonial, architect Paul Rovinelli transformed the hallway outside a new office into a light-filled reading nook. He turned two narrow shelf units outward to showcase the books since this upstairs landing is visible from the front door, and added panel detail to enhance the area left beside the larger units. Constructed from 5/4 clear-finish maple with MDF trim, adjustable shelves store books while window-seat cabinets hide games and other items. The large dormer window has a skylight effect, tempting readers to stay awhile.

ALCOVE FORMATION

Building around a furniture piece creates a cozy, architectural feel. Here, the sofa sits snugly between bookcases that form an inside corner. Crown molding that continues along the wall connects the bookcases, as does painting the built-ins, moldings, and walls the same deep-blue hue. Designer Ashley Whittaker extended the everything-in-its-place, shipshape feel of the room with library-style case-mounted lights. Planning for such lighting ahead of building is crucial in order to safely run wiring behind the woodwork.

PINE-PANELED LOOK

Even a clean, streamlined interior needs a place to put stuff. Here, an updated 1950s cabin takes knotty-pine paneling into the 21st century with a whitewash treatment and integrated shelving. The shelves in this open-plan living-dining area corral all the little things—books, art, bric-a-brac—and also maximize interior space by using the existing wall as the backing. Designer and homeowner Bobby Houston attached the open-back shelves directly onto the horizontal pine paneling. The shelves, made from 5/4 common pine stock, are fixed in place by means of dado cuts for a slightly rustic feel, while the uniform grid of shelves keeps the look simple and spare.

Building fundamentals

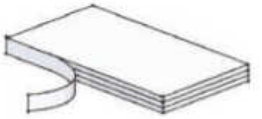
>MATERIALS

Solid wood: Hardwoods are strongest, but are also more costly than plywood or MDF. Lower-priced softwoods are not as supportive.

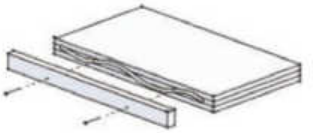
Hardwood plywood: Strong, 4-by-8-foot sheets are available in a wide range of face veneers suitable for paint or clear finishes.

MDF: The most affordable option. Not as stiff as solid wood or plywood, but won't cup, warp, or splinter. Takes paint beautifully.

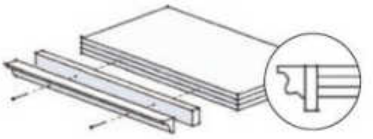
>EDGE TREATMENTS



Veneer tape: Has a backing that's coated in heat-sensitive adhesive. Use a hot iron to secure it to exposed plywood edges. Comes in a variety of looks.



Wood edging: To make thin stock look beefier, glue or nail larger nosing flush with the shelf top.



Molding: Adding a curved profile to the nosing creates a fancier edge.

Solid-wood face frames: Useful if you need to cover joints or if you want to add visual weight or interest to a case.

PHOTOS: JOHN GRUEN; (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP) ANTHONY TIEULI; (BOTTOM) COURTESY OF ASHLEY WHITTAKER DESIGN. ILLUSTRATIONS: ARTHUR MOUNT

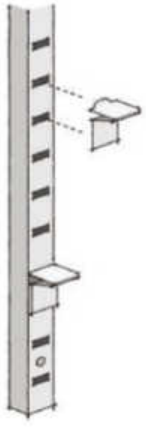
AIRY EFFECT

This built-in bookcase plays all the angles. Architect Mark Reilly designed the room around the minimalist canopy bed, aligning one shelf with the top of the mattress, continuing with equal-size book bays in the remaining space. The bookcase serves as both headboard and backdrop, providing storage for extra books, reading glasses, and decorative objects. The fixed shelves mimic the rectangles formed by the bed, the bench, even the beams overhead—creating an airiness that suggests a larger space. They also act as a sound barrier between the master bedroom and bath.

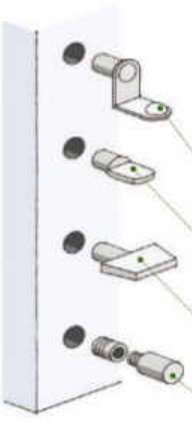
Support systems

Adjustable shelves allow for flexibility as needs change, while fixed supports can offer a cleaner look. Here's a quick overview of ways to achieve either type

>Supports for adjustable shelves



METAL STANDARDS
The simplest way to secure adjustable shelves in conjunction with clips. Quick to install and strong, they come in two widths: ⅝ inch and ¼ inch. Recess them into the side of the case for a more streamlined look.



PINS
Less obtrusive, metal pins recess into holes drilled into the bookcase.

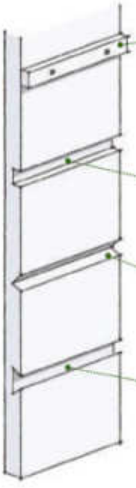
Padded: Helps keep the shelf in place.

Flat: Simple and inconspicuous.

Slotted: Fits into a kerf in the shelf.

Screw-in: A threaded sleeve means it won't slip out.

>Supports for fixed shelves



Cleat: Shelf sits on top of a wood strip screwed in place. Quick and easy to install.

Dado: Shelf slides into a groove. Strong support.

Decorative cut: Nice for display shelves that won't bear heavy loads.

Dovetail: Use a hammer or woodblock to lock in shelf. Handcrafted look.

PHOTOS: PAUL DYER; (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP) ANICE HOACHLANDER/BARNES VANZE ARCHITECTS; (BOTTOM) WERNER STRAUBE/ COURTESY OF TOM STRINGER DESIGN; STYLING: (THIS PAGE) SARAH ALBA. ILLUSTRATIONS: ARTHUR MOUNT

CURVED ON TOP

A strategic built-in can turn an awkward niche into a design feature. In renovating this turn-of-the-century home, architect Tom Stringer had to work around some challenging existing features. Faced with a fireplace situated on a painted brick wall, he added millwork details to create depth and interest, and installed an arched-top bookcase on one side to balance a low bookcase underneath a window on the other side. The built-in's true arch—no fool-the-eye face frame here—accommodates taller collectibles and sits proud of the wall, adding an elegant shadow line.

WHAT MATERIAL TO USE?

To figure out whether shelves should be made of MDF, plywood, pine, or oak—taking into account their span and what they will hold—search "sag calculator" online before you finalize a bookcase design.

FURNITURE STYLE

Plywood and trim are all it took to convert an existing recess off a back door into a furniture-like storage wall in a potting-area-cum-kitchenette serving an outdoor patio. The piece, which was built on-site, extends wall to wall and floor to ceiling, maximizing space without interfering with traffic flow. Architect Ankie Barnes gave the simple birch-plywood shelves a French-country feel with double-bead poplar trim, simple crown molding, and, at the base, feet in front of a false toekick. The stepped casing around the window is a charming effect that came about out of necessity: Because of the thick masonry walls, the out-swinging casement window required a subframe as well as a jamb extension. The paint color, a modern garden-green, freshens up the traditional casework.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

ALL ABOUT

Bamboo Flooring

You don't have to be a Zen master to love it. With lustrous beauty and newfound durability that rival hardwood's, this sustainable material is now delivering a host of versatile looks BY JOSH GARSKOF

WHILE BAMBOO FLOORING is not exactly new, having been around for two decades, it might as well be. In recent years, advances in manufacturing have enhanced its performance and diversified its appearance. The major change: the introduction of superdense "strand-woven" bamboo, which can be milled into boards that are two and a half times as hard as red oak. They also can be produced in an array of wood-look styles—from the familiar, like maple or walnut, to exotic species, like tigerwood and cumaru—that are quite different from what most people associate with the material. "Strand-woven has changed bamboo's reputation from an eco product to a major player, delivering the look and durability of Brazilian hardwoods for two-thirds the cost," says Joel Hirshberg, president of Green Building Supply, which has been selling bamboo floors for 16 years.

Whether you're simply looking for something a little different from what all your neighbors have or like the idea of remodeling with sustainability in mind—or just love the price—here's what you need to know about buying and installing today's bamboo flooring.

BAMBOO IS A GRASS, and the variety used for flooring is different from the plant that grows in a pot on your desk. This is Moso bamboo, which reaches its full height, 40 to 80 feet, in its first year and thickens to 6 to 8 inches in diameter as it matures over the next five years.

VITALS

WHAT'S THE COST?
From $2 to $10 per square foot for both solid and engineered boards, depending on type and finish. Expect to pay the same for installation as with a wood floor.

DIY OR HIRE A PRO?
Bamboo boards go down like wood—so if you're comfortable nailing or gluing tongue-and-groove oak or snapping down a floating floor, you can tackle bamboo.

WHERE TO USE IT?
Anywhere you'd use wood—including baths, kitchens, basements—but it's subject to the same risk of damage from excess moisture or dryness as hardwood.

WILL IT HOLD UP?
Most manufacturers provide lifetime structural warranties, while a factory finish should be guaranteed for at least 25 years.

Wide planks that look like exotic hardwood warm up this white kitchen. Morning Star 5⅛-inch Antique Strand Bamboo, $3.69 per sq. ft.; lumberliquidators.com

PHOTOS: (RIGHT) LACY RANE/GETTY IMAGES; (LEFT) STUDIO CEJA; (OPPOSITE PAGE, INSET) WILL AND DENI McINTYRE/GETTY IMAGES

Is it for you?

Ease of installation and affordability are pluses with this renewable material, but pay close attention to quality

Light Carbonized Engineered Strandwoven Bamboo, $6.99 per sq. ft.; ecofusionflooring.com

PROS

> **A fast-renewing resource,** bamboo is ready to harvest in 5 to 6 years, about one-tenth the time it takes red oak to mature. New stalks regrow from the same plant.

> **Generally less expensive** than a common hardwood by about $1 per square foot, and even cheaper in comparison with an exotic species.

> **Extremely durable,** a quality bamboo floor can last decades with care and minimal exposure to grit, high heels, and pets' nails.

CONS

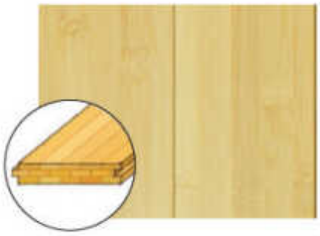
> **It can scratch,** even with a factory finish, just as wood does; use doormats inside and protective pads with furniture.

> **All bamboo** is not the same, and it can be hard to sort through the quality claims. Plus, the different types (see below) make apples-to-apples comparisons a challenge.

> **Off-gassing can occur** with lesser-quality flooring made with adhesives containing urea-formaldehyde.

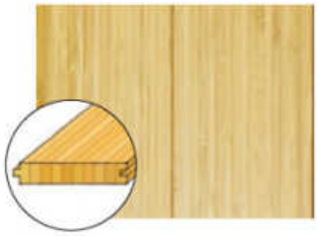
HOW IT'S MADE

Stalks are sliced into ¼-by-¾-inch strips, bound with powerful adhesives, then milled into three types of bamboo flooring



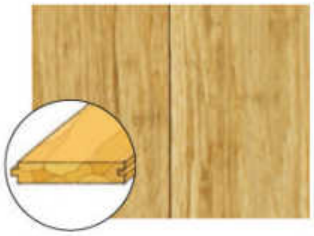
HORIZONTAL

Strips are adhered edge to edge, skin side up, making maximum use of the stalk. This orientation shows the nodes, or "knuckles," for a classic bamboo look. Offset layers add strength. Comes natural, stained, and carbonized (heat-treated during manufacturing to give it a caramel-like hue).



VERTICAL

Strips are arranged and glued with cut edges facing up for a linear look and a floor that's less likely to show dents than horizontal bamboo. Knuckles are much less noticeable, too. Available natural or carbonized but typically not stained, as a stain isn't absorbed as readily by the thin strips.



STRAND-WOVEN

Strips are soaked in adhesive, laid out lengthwise in various orientations, then compressed in giant hydraulic presses, creating a solid rectangular mass that's milled into floorboards. Two to three times denser than other types of bamboo, it lends itself to special finishes and surface treatments.

SHOP SMARTER

Learn to recognize key manufacturing features before you buy

THICKNESS Solid boards come ½ to ⅝ inch thick; engineered planks, ⅜ to ½ inch. Made with a bamboo veneer atop a plywood or bamboo substrate for added stability, engineered planks are good for floating floors in damp or very dry environments. Expect to find unfinished planks at ¾ inch thick, to be sanded on-site.

WIDTH The standard for solid bamboo is 3¾ inches, but 4- to 6-inch widths are gaining ground. As with prefinished wood floors, micro-beveled edges help hide unevenness between planks. Click-together engineered planks are square-edged, as are some traditional horizontal or vertical bamboo floorboards.

HARDNESS Though there is tremendous variation among products, vertical and horizontal bamboo floors typically score around 1,825 on the Janka scale (a universal hardness rating for flooring), harder than hickory. Strand-woven can score nearly double that, around 3,270, comparable to Brazilian redwood. Check company websites to see if third-party testing has been done.

FINISHES As with hardwood flooring, the glossier the finish, the more scratches will show. Factory-applied finishes offer superior durability but require more skill and labor to replace, unlike finishes that are applied on-site. (For more, see page 96.)

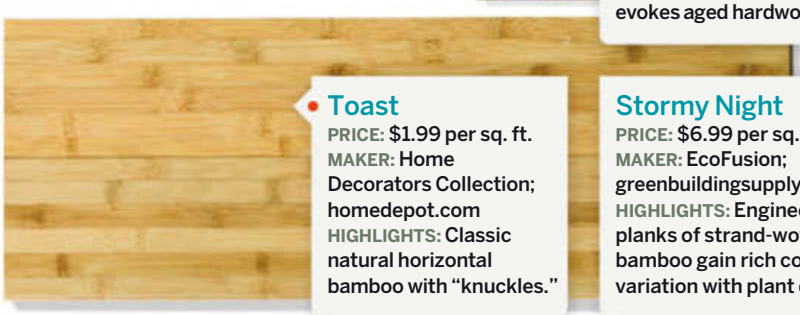
AIR QUALITY The second main ingredient in bamboo flooring is adhesive resin. Cheap urea-based resins can off-gas formaldehyde, a known carcinogen. Look for independent certification, such as one from GREENGUARD or FloorScore, that it won't emit high levels of VOCs.

PHOTOS: (TOP) DAN CUTRONA; (BOTTOM) TED MORRISON (3); (OPPOSITE PAGE) MANFRED KOH/TIME INC. DIGITAL STUDIO. ILLUSTRATIONS: ARTHUR MOUNT

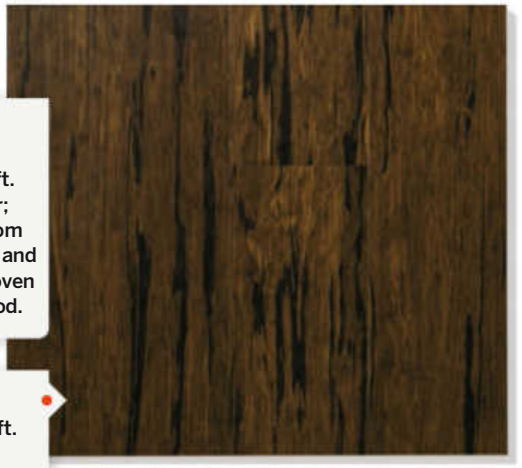
Pick your board

Ever greater options for stains, plank widths, and surface treatments offer something for everyone

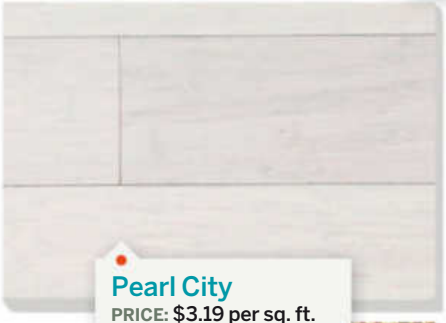
Hand-Scraped Honey
PRICE: $3.79 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Morning Star; lumberliquidators.com
HIGHLIGHTS: Stained and distressed strand-woven evokes aged hardwood.



Toast
PRICE: $1.99 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Home Decorators Collection; homedepot.com
HIGHLIGHTS: Classic natural horizontal bamboo with "knuckles."



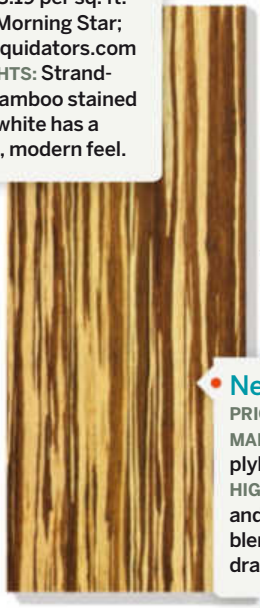
Stormy Night
PRICE: $6.99 per sq. ft.
MAKER: EcoFusion; greenbuildingsupply.com
HIGHLIGHTS: Engineered planks of strand-woven bamboo gain rich color variation with plant dyes.



Pearl City
PRICE: $3.19 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Morning Star; lumberliquidators.com
HIGHLIGHTS: Strand-woven bamboo stained grayish white has a lustrous, modern feel.

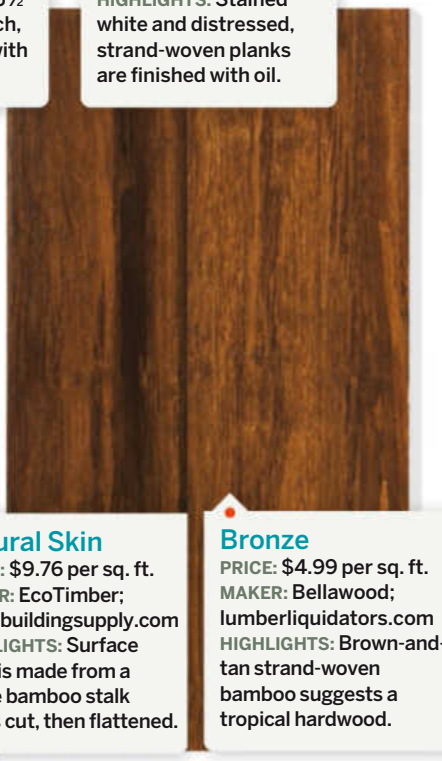
Hewn Port
PRICE: $7.79 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Teragren; greenbuildingsupply.com
HIGHLIGHTS: Planks 5½ inches wide with a rich, ruddy finish fit well with traditional interiors.

Rustic Beachwood
PRICE: $5.99 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Cali Bamboo; lowes.com
HIGHLIGHTS: Stained white and distressed, strand-woven planks are finished with oil.



Neopolitan
PRICE: $4.99 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Smith & Fong; plyboo.com
HIGHLIGHTS: Natural and carbonized strands blended together for a dramatic two-tone look.

Natural Skin
PRICE: $9.76 per sq. ft.
MAKER: EcoTimber; greenbuildingsupply.com
HIGHLIGHTS: Surface layer is made from a single bamboo stalk that's cut, then flattened.



Bronze
PRICE: $4.99 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Bellawood; lumberliquidators.com
HIGHLIGHTS: Brown-and-tan strand-woven bamboo suggests a tropical hardwood.

Installation tips

Like hardwood floors, it's easy to install, but heed these factors

As with wood, nailing yields the tightest results underfoot, but there are glue-down, floating, and click-together bamboo boards to suit whatever your site calls for. Just keep these considerations in mind.

A mallet racks boards together; the pneumatic nailer secures them.

ACCLIMATE BOARDS > Before it's installed, all bamboo flooring needs a waiting period inside the house so that its moisture content can stabilize. Skip that wait and your new floor can shift or show gaps. The only sure way to tell when the wait is over is with a moisture meter. Most horizontal and vertical bamboo can stabilize within three to four days, but strand-woven takes much longer, in some cases up to 30 days. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

EVALUATE THE SUBSTRATE > Over a flat plywood or oriented-strand-board (OSB) subfloor, bamboo needs only a layer of 15-pound builder's felt. Installations over concrete rely on glue or float over a foam underlayment. In either case, seal the concrete first to prevent moisture from causing the glue to pop off or the flooring to swell.

ENJOY RADIANT HEAT > As long as the heat source does not rise above the temperature limit stated by the manufacturer's guidelines, and the floor is floated, you can use radiant heat with bamboo flooring in your home.

How green is it, really?

Moso bamboo (*Phyllostachys edulis* 'Moso') grows naturally in China, where the vast majority of bamboo flooring is manufactured. If harvested stalk by stalk, without clear-cutting, it regrows in five to six years, making it a rapidly renewable resource. Some, but not all, companies can tell you if they source from a responsibly managed plantation. Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification is not yet widespread. As for the chemical-containing adhesives and finishes used in the finished product, looking for third-party certification (FloorScore and GREENGUARD are two among the most widely used) remains your best bet regarding VOC and formaldehyde emissions.

FINISH OPTIONS

Besides assuring long life, the right finish enhances a floor's beauty

FACTORY FINISH Most durable is a factory-applied, multilayer aluminum oxide coating—manufacturers claim anywhere from 2 to 10 layers—that comes topped with an additional clear coat. Aluminum oxide finishes provide superior wear resistance; the clear coat makes recoating easier and gives a smooth appearance.

OIL FINISH A new and growing trend is a wax-based coating, typically made of a combination of linseed oil, carnauba wax, and beeswax, that imitates the vintage look of a hand-applied oil. More matte in appearance, it's often applied over a distressed texture. Another part of its appeal: Scratches are less noticeable, and if damage occurs, the surface can be sanded and touched up with more oil. This finish requires renewal every few years with a specialty cleaner and a wipe-on oil, such as Rubio Monocoat.

UNFINISHED As with wood, most types of solid-bamboo flooring that are not stained or textured can be special-ordered without any finish. Sanding the boards after installation gives you the flattest surface, with no eased edges on the boards, and the opportunity for the custom stain of your choosing. It's much easier to refinish this type of floor if any damage occurs; however, finishing on-site won't provide nearly the longevity of factory-applied aluminum oxide.

CONSIDER THIS

While factory-finished bamboo that suffers severe damage can be mechanically stripped and refinished on-site, the job requires special sanding equipment, advanced dust filtration, and some finesse, especially with strand-woven bamboo. It's not generally considered a DIY job. If damage is confined to a small area, you may be able to patch in matching boards—a good reason to keep an extra box on hand.

Bamboo floors for every style

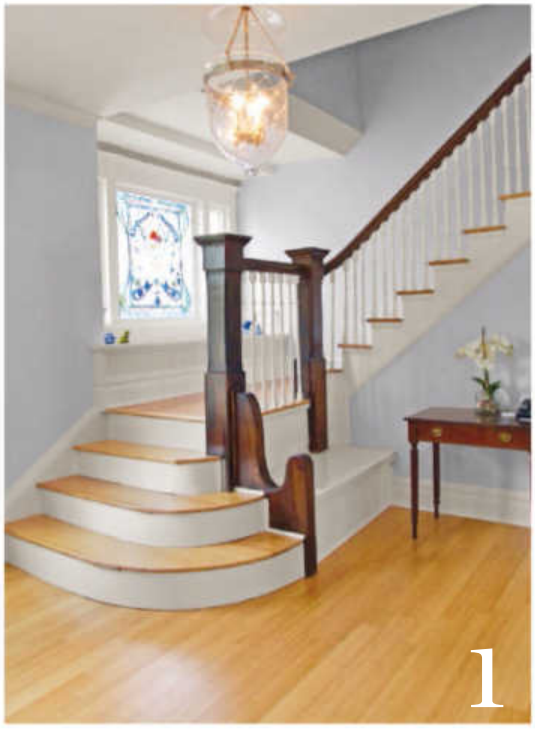
Whether your taste runs to the traditional, the modern, or somewhere in between, there's a look to complement any interior

1 > SLEEK TRADITIONAL
The blond vertical bamboo in this formal entry creates a serene backdrop for pale-blue walls, crisp white trim, and dark stair parts. Plus, it will hold up well to traffic, including high heels. Shown: Carbonized Vertical Prefinished Bamboo Flooring, $3.41 per sq. ft.; higuerahardwoods.com for stores

2 > REFINED RUSTIC
The carbonized horizontal bamboo underfoot has a warm caramel color and a subtly knotty look from the plant's characteristic "knuckles," echoing the room's exposed structural elements. Shown: Signature Naturals Prefinished in Caramelized, $5.52 per sq. ft.; teragren.com for stores

3 > COOL CONTEMPORARY
This natural-bamboo floor, with its simple vertical-edge-grain planks, complements the clean lines and broad, flat surfaces of this modern cook station. The floor's pale neutral hue helps unify the bold palette of black, white, and steel, with occasional hits of brilliant orange. Shown: Edge Grain Prefinished Flooring in Natural, $4.50 per sq. ft.; plyboo.com for stores

4 > CHARMING COTTAGE
Handsome ceiling beams balance the dark wide-plank, hand-scraped bamboo floor in this fresh-looking blue bath, wrapped with white wainscoting. Shown: Handscraped Engineered Strand Woven Bamboo in Walnut, $5.99 per sq. ft.; wellmadefloors.com for stores



PHOTOS: (1) IMAGE COURTESY OF GREENROSE FINE HOMES, GLEN RIDGE, NJ; (2) STEWART HOPKINS; (3) NORMA MOLINA LOPEZ; (4) IMAGE COURTESY OF WELLMADE; (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP) IMAGE COURTESY ECOTIMBER; (BOTTOM) IMAGES COURTESY OF WELLMADE (2)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 106

Ask THIS OLD HOUSE

INSIDE
SAGGING BIRCHES/WASTED HOT WATER/
UNINSULATED RECESSED LIGHTS/MORE

32 tips, tricks, and answers to your home-improvement questions

Q There's a loose bolt on my snowblower that I can't reach. Even if I could, there's not much room to tighten it. Any ideas?
—JAMES LINDER, SOUTH BEND, IND.

A Maybe you need one of these S-type box-end wrenches, also called obstruction wrenches for their ability to reach otherwise inaccessible locations. Developed in the 1920s for frustrated auto mechanics, this tool offers a greater turning radius than a straight box-end wrench in tight spaces. —THE EDITORS

PHOTOGRAPH BY VICTOR SCHRAGER

STYLING: JULIE FLYNN

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KEVIN O'CONNOR
Host

We want to remove and relocate an existing door to make it look like it's always been in its new spot. Any suggestions?

—HEATHER KREMER, SAN FRANCISCO

Tom Silva double-checks the height of an existing jamb to make sure it matches the new opening beside him.

TOM SILVA REPLIES: One thing people often overlook when relocating a door, or installing a salvaged one, is how much the trim contributes to the door's overall appearance. Saving that trim—including the existing jamb—goes a long way toward making a door look like it's always been there. Here are some other things to keep in mind when prepping the new opening for your old door.

Match the height. Doors in a hallway or landing should all be the same height and width. Use those dimensions to determine how big the rough opening should be and, if necessary, how much to extend or shorten the door itself.

Leave room to fine-tune. Jambs need to sit plumb and square inside the rough opening. If they don't, the door is going to swing in or out on its own or not shut properly. Typically, I leave a half-inch gap between each jamb and the stud next to it, and then use shims to adjust and stabilize the jambs before fastening them to the framing. To watch a video that shows how I do this, go to thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2016.

Install jambs first, then threshold. Always run the side jambs right to the floor. If the doorway needs a threshold, scribe

PHOTOS: ANTHONY TIEULI (ALL, THIS PAGE); (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP) TED MORRISON; (BOTTOM) DUSTYJROSE/ISTOCKPHOTO

and cut its ends to fit tightly against the jambs' profile, then toenail it with six 7d nails, three on each side.

Q Will my tile crack?

We are remodeling our kitchen and want to install a tile floor. What size tile should we use so that it won't crack?

—JULIE ELMORE, VIA E-MAIL

MARK FERRANTE REPLIES: You can get any size tile you want. When it comes to preventing cracks, what matters is what the tile is made of and how well it's supported.

Porcelain tiles are the hardest, most crack-resistant option, followed by glazed ceramic, then stone. But any of them can crack if the subfloor isn't stiff enough.

That means, at minimum, a ¾-inch plywood subfloor topped by ¼-inch cement board that's bedded in thinset and screwed in place. I make sure the cement board's joints do not line up with those of the plywood, and I spread two coats of a rubbery anti-fracture membrane, such as Hydro Ban (laticrete.com), over the cement board. This membrane prevents any movement of the subfloor from telegraphing through to the tile. I've been installing tile this way for years and haven't had any problems with cracking.

But when I do see cracked tiles, they're often adhered directly to plywood. Plywood expands and contracts with changes in humidity, and eventually the tile suffers for it.

Mark Ferrante is the owner of Ferrante Tile in Woburn, Mass., and has laid tile in dozens of This Old House *TV project houses.*

What is it?

A Target for laser level

B Scoring guide for drywall

C Ignition button for lawn mower

D Magnetic stud finder

FOR THE ANSWER, SEE PAGE 102.

Q Bent-over birches

An awful ice storm left our clump of paper birch trees bowing over in different directions. Is there anything we can do to salvage them, or are they a loss?

—KELLY BOISVERT, TEMPLETON, MASS.

ROGER COOK REPLIES: Young paper birch trees (*Betula papyrifera*, or white birch) have an almost bamboo-like flexibility that allows them to survive high winds and ice storms without snapping. It's a characteristic that Robert Frost celebrated in his poem "Birches," where he marveled at how these trees gently bent to the ground when he climbed them as a boy.

Unfortunately, you can't count on a birch to naturally spring back upright after it's loaded with ice. As Frost noted, "once they are bowed/So low for long, they never right themselves. . . ."

But your trees are not necessarily a loss. If you can rope together the upper half or so of the trunks in your clump, you should be able to pull the trees out of their "bough-down" posture. Make loose loops around each trunk and use a short length of garden hose to keep the rope from rubbing over the bark as you pull it tight. Remove the guylines in the spring when the danger of snow and ice storms is past and the trunks resume growing again.

You can stop your birches from sagging next winter by tying the trunks together in the fall, following the same precautions. One little trick: White ropes and black hose will blend in nicely with the birches' bark.

Q No wait for hot water

Our water heater is on one end of the house and the kitchen is on the other. Even though the pipe is insulated, we still waste a lot of water waiting for it to get hot. What would you suggest we do to correct that situation?

—ORLANDO METZ, PALMYRA, MO.

RICHARD TRETHEWEY REPLIES: Moving your water heater closer to the kitchen would certainly help, but relocating and replumbing a water heater is not a practical solution for most folks. There are a couple of easier ways to reduce the waste, and the wait.

One option is to install a point-of-use electric water heater under the sink. These units, which have either a small water tank or an in-line heating element, deliver hot water within a few seconds after you open the tap, then shut off as soon as water from the primary

The ability of paper birch trees to bend saves them from snapping under a load of ice, but they do need help to become upright again.

heater reaches it. While they do save water and time, they also guzzle electricity and need to be inspected and flushed regularly, just like a full-size heater.

The approach I prefer is to pull hot water from the existing water heater *when it's needed* by using a small recirculating pump like the TacoGenie (taco-hvac.com). When activated by a button, a timer, or a motion sensor, the pump pulls cold water from the hot-water supply pipe and pushes it back to the heater through the cold-water supply pipe. The pump, which is installed under the sink, runs until it senses that the water on the hot side is warm enough. When it shuts off, you get hot water as soon as you turn on the faucet.

Yes, there is a short wait while the water recirculates, but compared with point-of-use heaters, the electricity use is minimal and you don't have any of the maintenance. To see how to set up one of these systems, go to thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2016.

What is it?

B Scoring guide for drywall

Fastened to the hook of a tape measure, the Zip-Rip makes it easy to hold a utility knife at an exact distance from the edge of a panel and cut straight scoring marks. $3.50; zip-rip.com

PHOTO: TED MORRISON

Q LEDs and recessed light fixtures

The recessed lights in my house are accessible from the attic, but there's no insulation around them because it says on the fixtures that they need to vent the heat

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generated by incandescent bulbs. If I replace those bulbs with LEDs, will that reduce the heat enough so I can insulate around the existing lighting cans?

—T. J. GUINTA, PATCHOGUE, N.Y.

SCOTT CARON REPLIES: While LEDs run much cooler than incandescents, their electronic components and external heat sinks do get quite hot; you would still need to keep the insulation away from your fixtures. And that leaves you with some serious problems. Those fixtures allow huge amounts of warm air—not only from the bulbs but from all over your house—to vent into your attic, which jacks up your heating bill, creates drafts, and contributes to the formation of ice dams after a snowfall. Also, every vent hole in your ceiling reduces its fire rating. Plugging the holes should be your first priority.

You could hire an electrician to replace each fixture with a sealed one rated for insulation contact (IC). But here's another solution, which you can do yourself: Go to a home center and buy a fire-rated recessed light cover, like the ones made by Tenmat (tenmatusa.com), for every fixture. Also, pick up a tube or two of firestop sealant, such as 3M's Fire Barrier (3m.com).

Up in the attic, clean the ceiling surface around each fixture, slit the cover to accommodate the electrical cable, and place the cover over the fixture. Apply the sealant around the cable and along the edge of the cover where it rests on the ceiling. Now it will be safe to heap insulation onto that spot.

I do recommend that you replace your bulbs with LEDs because they're so energy-efficient, but make sure they're rated for use in fully enclosed fixtures. If not, the heat buildup will shorten their lifespan significantly. For this application, I'm a big fan of the Halo recessed-retrofit LED downlight (cooper-electric.com). It can withstand the heat inside a sealed IC fixture, comes in a warm 2700K color temperature, and is dimmable.

Scott Caron, a licensed master electrician and the owner of Caron Electric in Lexington, Mass., appears regularly on TV episodes of Ask This Old House.

Ask THIS OLD HOUSE

Go to: thisoldhouse.com/asktoh

Or write to: Ask This Old House
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Include a complete address and daytime phone number. Published questions will be edited for clarity and length and may be used in other media. We regret that, because of the volume of mail received, we're unable to reply to unpublished questions.

This Old House editors' picks

More great stuff

Of the many tools, materials, and other home-improvement products that we discover every month, here are the standouts. —THE EDITORS

Make firewood faster

GripRock Splitting Block, by LeverAxe USA
Now you can chop nonstop, and with greater safety. A concrete base puts logs at the ideal height for efficient splitting—about 30 inches off the ground. And a modified tire bolted to the base holds logs upright, corrals all the splits, and, if you miss, stops the ax from hitting the ground or your leg. $99; leverax.com

Smart control for outdoors

Outdoor Switch, by iDevices
This raintight plug is the first Apple HomeKit–enabled product that lets you remotely control, monitor, and schedule the operation of outdoor electrical devices, including holiday lights, spotlights, and water fountains. Works with a smartphone app or voice commands to Siri. Dual receptacles allow users to control two products simultaneously. $79; idevicesinc.com

Fun building blocks

EverBlock, by EverBlock Systems
These supersize Lego look-alikes can be assembled into colorful partition walls, garden edging, bars, sheds, even furniture. Made of a polypropylene copolymer, they snap together; no mortar or adhesive required. A 12-by-6-by-6-inch block has holes for electrical cable and rebar. $126 for the 18-piece kit; everblocksystems.com

Little big saw

JS120BN 12-volt cordless jigsaw, by Bosch
At 3.3 pounds and just 9.4 inches long, this is the lightest, most compact cordless jigsaw on the market. But it still boasts all the latest big-tool features: variable speeds, orbital cutting action, an LED light, quick blade changes, and a beveling shoe with a no-mar plastic protector. Battery and charger sold separately. $129; boschtools.com

Roofing with texture

Glenwood Lifetime Designer Shingles, by GAF
These are the thickest asphalt shingles you can buy: Their 3/8-inch butt edges match those on sawn cedar shingles, adding eye-pleasing texture to any roof. This roofing comes with a Class A fire rating, a 130 mph wind rating, a built-in algicide to prevent black streaks and moss, and a transferable lifetime limited warranty. Around $300 per 100 square feet; gaf.com

Goes way beyond tool storage

Coolbox toolbox, by Coolbox
What makes it so cool? The onboard battery, for one, to charge wireless devices and power its LED floodlights, digital clock, and marine-grade Bluetooth speakers. Not to mention a dry-erase board, a 10-foot power cord with a three-way splitter, and an impressive 1,800-cubic-inch storage capacity. Roll it around like luggage on its built-in wheels. $199; coolbox.io

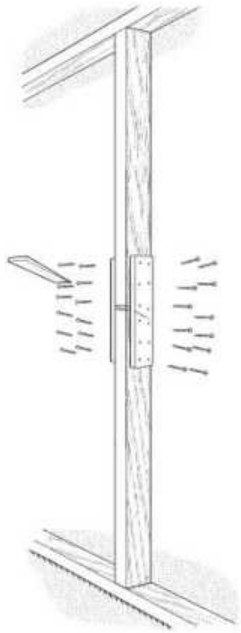
Norm's tricks of the trade

Q Now that I'm finally getting around to building a partition wall, some of the studs I bought have bowed. Can I still use them or do I have to go buy more?

—DELLMAR YELLOCK, PHILADELPHIA

A If the studs don't have any other defects, go ahead and build the wall with the ones you've got. But before hanging the drywall, you should straighten any stud that bows in or out of the wall's plane by more than ⅛ inch. Otherwise, that bow will leave an obvious hump or dip when the wall is finished. (Note: This fix works only with non-load-bearing walls. If the wall were load-bearing, you'd need to replace the bowed studs with straight ones.)

1] Cut into the edge. Halfway up from the floor, on the inside of the curve, make a 45° cut about three-quarters of the way through. Pull the stud until it's straight, then tap a shingle into the open kerf, as shown. Use a utility knife to trim the shingle flush on the sides.



2] Reinforce the stud. Cut two ½-inch-plywood gussets about 24 inches long and ¼ inch narrower than the stud's width, so they won't interfere with hanging the drywall. Apply construction adhesive to the gussets, and center each one—side to side and top to bottom—on a stud face, covering the cut. Then fasten each gusset with twelve 1¼-inch deck screws. Finally, score the shingle with a utility knife and snap it off flush with the stud's edge.

PHOTO: WENDELL T. WEBBER; (OPPOSITE PAGE, BUILDING BLOCKS) ANDREW McCAUL. ILLUSTRATIONS: HARRY BATES

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PROJECT OF THE WEEK

HOW TO
MAKE A WINE RACK FROM A PLANTER BOX

GETTY IMAGES

Now that the holidays are over, you'll need a spot to store all those bottles of wine you received. But don't buy a wine rack—transform a wood planter and plywood into a simple storage piece that takes up little counter or table space. Even better: You can put it together in less time than it takes to cook the average holiday meal. And that's something to drink to.

Paint or stain the finished rack to complement your decor. To unify the materials and protect your wine collection from exposure to light, paint the interior surfaces of the planter and one side of the rear support in a dark color.

You'll find all the tools and supplies necessary for this—and any—home project at The Home Depot nearest you.

For step-by-step instructions, go to thisoldhouse.com/project

Directory JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016

COVER: *See the listing for "Detail Work."*

HOME SOLUTIONS *(pp. 15–24)* **Winter workshop woes:** *Thanks to* Bob Behnke; franklininternational.com. Rick Watson; sherwin-williams.com.

BEFORE + AFTER: KITCHEN DESIGN Room with a view *(pp. 27–29)* **Designer:** Jessica Risko Smith Interior Design; jrsid.com. **Contractor:** Below Magid Construction; belowmagid.com. **Custom cabinets:** Utt Construction; uttconstruction.com. **Filter faucet:** waterinc.com. **Microwave:** whirlpool.com. **Dishwasher:** bosch-home.com/us. **Range hood:** windsterhood.com.

BEFORE + AFTER: BATH DESIGN Upsized and unified *(pp. 35–36)* **Designer/builder:** Mike Freeman and Kim Clements, J.A.S. Design Build; jasdesignbuild.com. **Paint:** Off-White No. 3 (walls) and Wimborne White No. 239 (trim); us.farrow-ball.com. **Beveled ceramic subway tile and base tile:** quarrytile.com. **Brown porcelain field tile:** pentalonline.com. **Custom cabinets:** J.A.S. Design Build. **Vanity sinks:** lacava.com. **Shower drain:** zurn.com. **Faucets, tub filler, and showerhead:** hansgrohe-usa.com. **Lighting:** Visual Comfort; circalighting.com. **Towel warmer:** mysoncomfort.com. **Towel ring, hooks, and pocket-door privacy set:** rejuvenation.com. **Shaving mirror:** waterworks.com. **Vanity and medicine-cabinet knobs:** restorationhardware.com.

BEFORE + AFTER: CLOSET DESIGN Walk-ins welcome *(pp. 38–41)* **Homeowner's blog:** amerelife.com. **Paint (his):** PPU18-01 Cracked Pepper; behr.com. **Wallpaper (his):** Coastal Sisal; thibautdesign.com.

PAINT IDEAS Faux wall frames *(p. 56)* **Paint:** OC-45 Swiss Coffee (base coat), OC-64 Pure White (top coat), and 2121-40 Silver Half Dollar (faux frames); benjaminmoore.com.

DESIGN INSIDER Details make the difference *(pp. 58–59)* **Designer:** S.R. Gambrel; srgambrel.com.

READ THIS BEFORE YOU BUY A MATTRESS *(pp. 60–63)* *Thanks to* themattressunderground.com; sleeplikethedead.com. Walter Bader; omimattress.com. Kurt Ling; poshandlavish.com.

WEEKEND REMODEL How to install a no-sweat backsplash *(pp. 65–69)* **Tile:** Capriccio Arabesco field tiles with Capriccio Angolo Liner, Classic Molding, Quarter Round, Single Bullnose (3×6 inches on 6 inches), and Double Bullnose (3×3 inches) accent tiles, all in Cashmere Grey; annsacks.com. **Faucet:** Brantford Collection; moen.com. **Cabinet hardware:** Bristol Smoked 1⅜-inch knobs, Bristol Smoked 1-inch knobs, and Canfield 5-inch drawer pulls, all in Oil-Rubbed Bronze; rejuvenation.com. **Grout float:** HART Quick-Tatch Gum Rubber Grout Float; harttools.com. **Tile saw:** Ridgid 8-inch Wet Tile and Paver Saw (Model # R4040S); ridgid.com.

DETAIL WORK *(pp. 70–77)* *Thanks to* Brent Hull, Hull Historical; brenthullcompanies.com. **Architect:** Frank Garretson, Sheffield, MA; 413-717-1968. **General contractor:** Anderson Enterprises, Sharon, CT; 860-364-5194. **Interior designer:** Chris Brennan, Salisbury, CT; 860-435-0365. **Paint contractor:** Jason Hanley, Lakeville, CT; 860-307-1965. **Decorative painting:** Lance Middlebrook, Millerton, NY; 518-821-4690. **Plaster contractor:** Zordan & Sons, Torrington, CT; 860-489-5938. **Flooring contractor:** Frank Monda, Sheffield, MA; 413-229-3434. **Mason:** Bill Anstett, Millerton, NY; 518-789-9142.

20 EASY WAYS TO GET OLD-HOUSE CHARM *(pp. 78–85)* *Thanks to* Bo Sullivan; arcalus.com. Charles Peterson; charlespetersonflooring.com.

NOT YOUR BASIC BOOKCASE *(pp. 86–91)* **Rolling ladder:** stairwayshop.com. Designers: **Library style:** Bret Franks Construction; bretfranks.com. **Happy landing:** H.P. Rovinelli Architects; hprovinelli.com. **Alcove formation:** Ashley Whittaker Design; ashleywhittakerdesign.com. **Pine-paneled look:** Hauswork Design; hausworkdesign.com. **Airy effect:** Mark Reilly Architecture; markreillyarchitecture.com. **Curved on top:** Tom Stringer Design Partners; tomstringer.com. **Furniture style:** Barnes Vanze Architects; barnesvanze.com.

ALL ABOUT BAMBOO FLOORING *(pp. 92–97)* **How it's made:** Foundations horizontal, vertical, and strand bamboo flooring, all in Natural finish; greendepot.com. *Thanks to* Sarah Barnard; sarahbarnard.com. Corey Brinkema; us.fsc.org. Karen Feeney; buildallen.com. Nicole Goldman; ggreendesign.com. Tom Goodham; teragren.com. Walker Hicks; calibamboo.com. Joel Hirshberg; greenbuildingsupply.com. Jay Quickel; lumberliquidators.com. Dan Smith; plyboo.com. Ryan Thewes; ryanthewes.com.

SAVE THIS OLD HOUSE *(p. 112)* *Thanks to* Claudia Deviney, Preservation North Carolina; presnc.org.

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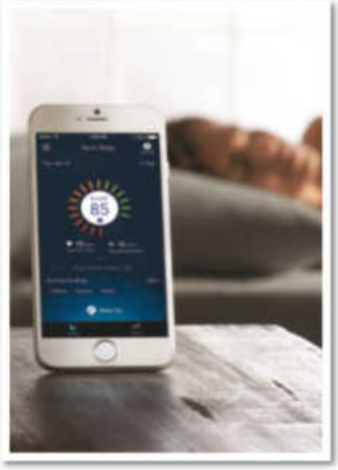

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3/8"	807/61276
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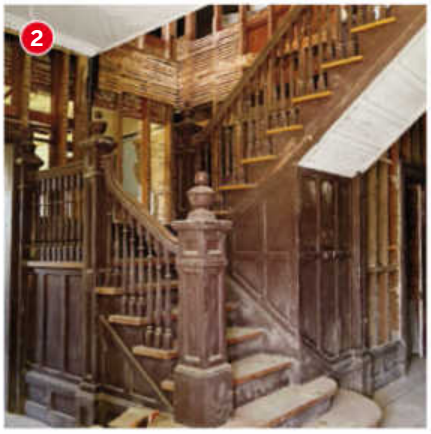
THE HISTORY The town of La Grange was founded in 1869 as a farming community, but a few residents were wealthy enough to build majestic homes. This manse was one of them, erected circa 1890 by George B. W. Hadley, the son of a prominent local physician, Dr. J. M. Hadley, who financed the project and lived upstairs while using the first floor as his office and exam area. The house passed through a few hands after the Hadleys, even serving a brief stint as a thrift shop. Now, Preservation North Carolina (presnc.org) is looking for a new owner who can salvage its beauty.
WHY SAVE IT? The classic Queen Anne is rich in detail, including inlaid wood floors, stained-glass windows, and sections of board-and-batten wainscoting. Outside, the house is clad in Dutch-lap wood siding. Its generous porch is adorned with turned posts and a spindle frieze and is crowned with a small balcony.
WHAT IT NEEDS The bones are in good shape, and so is the exterior, though it will need some fresh paint and a few repairs. Most of the windows and doors are intact, too, and the flooring is in fair condition throughout. But this will still be a full reno that requires adding plumbing and HVAC and updating the electrical. Fortunately, the current owners already tore out most of the plaster, which will help make faster work of the installations; and though the town has fewer than 3,000 residents, it's only 15 miles from Goldsboro and 67 miles from Raleigh. The updates may not be easy, but a home this grand is worth the effort. —MEGAN BAKER



1. The four-bedroom, three-bath house is about 4,000 square feet and sits on a half-acre lot.
2. A carved oak balustrade and newel post grace the stairs. Most of the plaster has been removed.
3. Many of the windows are intact, including this second-floor stained-glass bay window.
4. The home's seven working fireplaces still feature elaborate mantels.

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